ANCIENT JUDAISM
AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Prayer in Josephus

TESSEL M. JONQUIÈRE

brill

Prayer in Josephus

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INTRODUCTION

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37—ca. 100 CE) has attracted a good deal of attention in recent years. Indeed, books on Josephus and his works abound;[1] there has also been great interest in the subject of prayer in early Judaism.[2] However, no detailed study has as yet been made of prayer in the work of Flavius Josephus, a study in which these two areas of research may be combined to the mutual benefit of both.

I. The Relevance of the Study

A study of prayer in Josephus' writings can represent a new approach to the study of Josephus' life and work. It can offer answers to questions about his views on history and theology. The present study will focus on Josephus' views on prayer, the manner in which he uses prayers in his narrative and the ideas which emerge from his prayers.

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[1] To name only a few of the publications that have appeared in the past ten years, in 1996, Robert Gnuse published his book, *Dreams & Dream Reports in the Writings of Josephus*. A year later, Christine Gerber published *Ein Bild des Judentums von Flavius Josephus*, which deals entirely with Josephus' *Contra Apionem*. 1998 saw the publication both of Paul Spilsbury's *The image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible*, and two books by Louis Feldman, *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible* and *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*. In 2003, Steve Mason published the second, revised, edition of his book, *Josephus and the New Testament*, the first edition of which had already been translated into German in 2000. E.J. Brill, the Leiden publishers, are preparing a translation and commentary of Josephus' complete works; the first four volumes have already appeared (*Antiquitates* 1–4 in 2000; *Vita* in 2001; *Antiquitates* 5–7 in 2004 and *Antiquitates* 8–10 in 2005). Until recently, work was in progress in Münster on a new critical text edition.

[2] In 1994, a collection of papers was published by James H. Charlesworth, Mark Harding and Mark Kiley, entitled *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*, based on a SBL seminar. In 1997, there were several books on prayer, including another collection of papers by Kiley, *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*, and a book by Simon Pulleyn entitled *Prayer in Greek Religion*. In 1998, Rodney A. Werline's *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* appeared, followed in 1999 by Judith Newman, *Praying by the Book. The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, a study of the place of the Bible in the three prayers under discussion. In 2003 the *International Society for Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature* held a conference on the theme, 'The function and relevance of prayer in deuterocanonical literature'. The proceedings were published as *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran* (Berlin 2004).

At the same time, an analysis of Josephus' prayers could make a significant contribution to the study of prayer in general. Josephus represents a source of major importance for anyone working with material from the biblical period in its widest sense; his work is frequently consulted and he is often referred to in connection with matters of dating or topography, or descriptions of people, groups or places. But most importantly for the purposes of the study of prayer, there is no single corpus in Jewish writing, other than the Bible itself, which contains as many prayers as Josephus' work. Such a large body of material, indeed, that, in view of Josephus' significance in Judaism, it is important to analyse his views on prayer, as has already been done for other Jewish prayer texts.

II. The Field of Study

We propose to concentrate on three areas. Firstly, the prayers themselves and their literary function. The prayers to be found in Josephus' work are not liturgical in character, they tend to occur within a narrative context; they are uttered by a (historical) personage as part of the narrative process. The author, however, has in effect used the prayers as opportunities to add something personal, because they are distinct units within the narrative. It is clear from those parts of his work for which Josephus has used a known source, that when it comes to prayers, he hardly ever sticks to the content of this source. The prayers are used as literary devices; they may be taken on their own merits, and yet form part of the narrative whole.

Whenever Josephus writes a narrative based on source material, he generally sticks to the broad outlines of the account in that source. However, whenever such an account includes a prayer, it transpires that he has taken liberties with the text. Typically, he follows a storyline but will change any prayer within it in such a way as to alter the emphasis of the narrative. Not only does he change any prayers that were in the original source text, but he also introduces prayers into an existing framework where there were none before. We shall return to this aspect of his narrative technique later.

In addition to the literary functions of prayer, the texts of a prayer may also reveal something of the theology of the author. This is the second aim of our study. The adjustments to the prayer texts which

we mentioned earlier allow Josephus to convey his own view, not only of the story itself or of its central character, but also his theology and world view. Unlike speeches and dreams, prayers are always religious elements relating to God and thus to religion. This is why we may safely say that prayers can also tell us something of the author's ideas on God and religion.

The study of various passages has shown that the prayers in Josephus' work are specifically Jewish elements. As we know, Josephus modelled his work on that of the great Greek historians, like Thucydides and Polybius.[3] Their works do not, however, contain as many prayers. It seems reasonable to suppose that Josephus' use of prayers was inspired by his biblical source, a conclusion that is borne out by numbers: of the 134 prayers, 102 are in the biblical part of *Antiquitates Judaicae*.[4] Only nine prayers in all have been attributed to a non-Jewish character, four of which are not addressed to the Jewish God.[5] Equally, seeing that most of the prayers are spoken by Jewish characters, we may conclude that these prayers express Jewish theology.

Finally, the third aim of our investigation is to study Josephus and his cultural context, and how that cultural context was expressed in his writings. For years there has been speculation about the degree to which Josephus' work was influenced by his Jewish background or his Roman surroundings, about the way he interpreted biblical material, and about the picture he painted of the Jewish people and their religion. It is readily apparent that, by the time he wrote his last three books, he had been living in Rome for more than 25 years. Scrutiny of the language used in the prayers shows an interesting combination of elements that were originally Jewish or Greek. A study of the prayers may well shed a new and, indeed, a fresh light on these and similar topics.

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[3] Feldman, *Josephus*, 827–829, 888–889; Thackeray, *Josephus*, 41, 110–114; see also Feldman, *Josephus's*, 3–13.

[4] The biblical part comprises AJ 1–11.303.

[5] Tiberius, AJ 18.211; Titus, BJ 5.519; Roman soldiers, BJ 6.123; crowds in Rome, BJ 7.73; Vespasian and Titus at the tribunal, BJ 7.128 and Vespasian and Titus after the execution of Simon, BJ 7.155; for the treatment of these prayers see the appendix at the end of Chapter 3, pp. 217–220.

III. Content of the Present Study

Chapter 1 starts with a review of the most important literature on prayer published within the past century; we will then give a definition of prayer, followed by a description of the process by which I arrived at my selection of prayers to analyse.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of Josephus' view of prayer on the basis of a passage in his *Contra Apionem* in which, as part of his exposition of Jewish law, he also deals with prayer and sacrifice. In this passage he explains how one ought to behave while sacrificing and what one should and should not ask for in a prayer. The second part of Chapter 2 deals with a short passage in the fourth book of *Antiquitates Judaicae* in which Josephus discusses the daily prayers. The chapter ends with a discussion of certain brief passages in which Josephus refers to prayer.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the actual prayers. Out of the total number in Josephus' works, 32 have been selected for in-depth treatment in the form of a commentary in which the prayers are discussed in their context and compared with their source text, if any. We will also analyse any particularly noteworthy choice of expression or turn of phrase, choices which often appear to have been affected by Josephus' cultural context.

Chapter 4 discusses the functions of the prayers within their narrative context, based on an analysis of context and source text; we also address the question of a possible difference between the meaning of a prayer in the source text (if there is one) and in Josephus' narrative. This will afford an insight into the way in which prayer can be used, and also into Josephus' possible views on the story in question or its chief character.

In Chapter 5, Josephus' own thoughts about prayer (as discussed in the second chapter) are compared with the prayers he wrote. Certain questions are then raised, such as the extent to which his prayers tie in with his own recommendations and what we subsequently learn about these recommendations and the characters who do or do not adhere to them.

Chapter 6 focusses on Josephus' theology and especially his view of God. A number of theological concepts emerge from the prayers which we shall take out of their textual context and place in three categories, corresponding to three divine attributes: God as origin, God as ruler and God as protector.

And finally, we intend to answer the following questions: What is the nature of prayer in Josephus' work? What does he say about prayer, how does he use prayers in his work and what ideas emerge from them?

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS PRAYER?

I. Prayer in Ancient Literature—A Review of Previous Studies

A. *Prayer in general*

The scientific study of prayer may be said to have begun in 1918 with the publication of an impressive work by Friedrich Heiler entitled, *Das Gebet. Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung*. According to Heiler, prayer had previously been investigated from four different perspectives: philology and history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*), comparative religion (*vergleichende Religionswissenschaft*), psychology of religion and philosophy of religion. There was a confusing multiplicity of starting points and methods and few people succeeded in penetrating the *sanctum sanctorum* of prayer.[1] What Heiler wanted to do was to sketch a general picture of prayer from a scientific point of view, starting from 'pure, naïve religion'.

Heiler starts by saying that it is difficult to investigate prayer in this manner since there are hardly any sources containing real, personal prayers. This is because the prayers he has in mind in his book, namely personal prayers, are not of the same nature as the literary prayers we encounter in Josephus' work. But, although his starting point is different, it is still useful to study his book since it shows us that it is important to realise the difference between these kinds of prayer. The prayer sources that are available according to Heiler he divides into two main categories: prayers that have actually been prayed and prayers that have been composed in writing. The first category comprises three different kinds of sources. Firstly, prayers that were spoken out loud and overheard by other people who wrote them down. Examples of this kind of prayer are prayers by Jesus and a prayer by Francis of Assisi. Secondly, there are prayers that have been written down by the person praying himself; these prayers do however, according to Heiler, not reflect completely

[1] Heiler, *Gebet*, 4–16.

what was expressed in the real prayer. For this kind he gives examples of prayers by (again) Francis of Assisi, Bunyan and the Old Testament prophets. The third kind are prayers that have been written down by others on the request of the praying person.[2]

Besides the 'prayed prayers', there are also prayers that are literary compositions; they occur in four different kinds of forms: examples like the Lord's prayer or prayer paradigms by Luther; prayer formulas which are used in liturgy, ritual or for private devotion; prayers that are poems (*Gebetsdichtung*), meant as artistic expression rather than for liturgy or devotion; and, finally, prayers as a literary device, as found in epics and dramas: the prayers spoken by characters in those stories, have never been spoken in real life, but they are based on reality.[3] The kind of prayers that we see in Josephus' work fits this latter category.

Heiler goes on to categorise types of prayer chronologically. The first type is naïve praying by primitive man: it is spontaneous, without any of the boundaries imposed by writing them down, as there are in ritual prayers or hymns. The vestiges of this type of prayer are, according to Heiler, still to be seen in prayer posture, gestures and certain archaic formulas.[4] After discussing the ritual prayer formula and the hymn, Heiler arrives at prayer in the religion of the Hellenic culture at its zenith where the gods were no longer restricted to their original nature and area and were anthropomorphised, as we see in the Iliad and Odyssey. Prayer and sacrifice became the only forms of worship in which the Homeric heroes communicated with their gods; the whole of life was permeated with prayer and the prevailing culture of sacrifice.[5] Heiler next discusses prayer critiques by philosophers and their prayer ideals. He concludes that prayer and philosophy cannot actually be reconciled. Prayer is a problem that cannot be avoided, as we can see from the title of Maximus of Tyre's treatise, Εἰ δεῖ εὔχεσθαι (*Should we pray?*), because God is abstract, non-personal and his existence has not been proved, whereas belief in the real presence of God underlies all prayer. This is why, according to Heiler, philosophy actually wants to abolish prayer, and bans it to the periphery.[6] Heiler then moves on in history, discussing great religious personalities and movements. His

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[2] Heiler, *Gebet*, 27–31.
[3] Heiler, *Gebet*, 31–34.
[4] Heiler, *Gebet*, 38–47.
[5] Heiler, *Gebet*, 191–200.
[6] Heiler, *Gebet*, 200–219.

purpose of approaching prayer as a *religionswissenschaftlich* phenomenon, mainly focussing on prayers that were really said. However, since it is our intention to examine literary prayers, we must turn to other authors.

One of these is Eduard Norden. In 1913 he published *Agnostos Theos. Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede*, the second part of which forms a stylistic analysis of prayer and predicate formulas. Unlike Heiler, Norden's approach is philological, offering a study of the different styles in which prayers were written or delivered, amply illustrated with examples. He does not expressly distinguish between delivered and non-delivered prayers, as Heiler does, but only discusses written source texts. In the first section, 'Hellenica', he classifies styles of invocation in Greek odes, eulogies or other kinds of prayer according to whether a god was addressed in the second or third person; other criteria were the use of participles or of relative clauses to specify the god invoked, for example 'Zeus, who rules gods and men' or 'Thou, ruling gods and men'.[7] The elaborations on these different styles have proved to be especially useful for the study of prayer in Josephus' work, since they are style forms that can be found in Josephus' prayers.[8]

After 'Hellenica', Norden goes on to discuss 'Judaica', treating the Jewish material merely as an element shedding light on early Christianity; he warns philologists to be aware that the historic development of formulaic language runs via Judaism rather than Hellenism.[9] In turn, Judaic literature, according to Norden, has its roots in early Babylonian literature. Accordingly, he discusses various Babylonian and Assyrian texts to prove that the style used in Jewish prayers has its origin here.[10] His *religionsgeschichtliche* conclusion is that a line may be drawn from Babylonia via Judaism and Samaritan gnosis to the Gospels (and beyond, to Islam); his *stilgeschichtliche* conclusions follow, again with several examples.

In dealing with 'Christiana', he reiterates that the wealth of religious formulae all come from Judaism; there would have to be unusual similarities between Greek and Christian prayers to prove any dependence there; he thus takes these unusual similarities as his starting point, when he discusses the language in Christian prayer. He shows how Paul used both Hellenic and Semitic elements, but says that most Hellenic

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[7] Norden, *Agnostos*, 143–176.
[8] See the discussion of the prayer by Moses outside Datham's tent, p. 119.
[9] Norden, *Agnostos*, 177.
[10] Norden, *Agnostos*, 207–220.

elements were also present in Hellenistic Jewish literature; in the end, he concludes that there are no Hellenic elements in the formulation; there was only a Hellenic varnish applied to the ancient Egyptian-Babylonic modes of speech by second century Christian writers.[11]

For a study of the language of prayer, this book can be a useful guide, as it has been for the study of Josephus' prayers. As we have seen, the ground-breaking books by Heiler and Norden, which both appeared in the second decade of the twentieth century, complement each other well.

The major reference work, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, contains two long articles devoted to prayer: 'Gebet I', written by Emmanuel von Severus (1972), treats prayer in general, from ancient Greek prayer to monastic prayer practice in the early Middle Ages. 'Gebet II' (by Otto Michel, 1976), subtitled 'Fürbitte' (intercession), relates to prayers that are performed on behalf of other people. Both articles are so compactly written that they are impossible to summarise at this point. They are, however, very useful for scholars who want to study prayer in ancient and early Christian literature.

B. *Schlatter*

A third book that appeared in the same decade as the books by Heiler and Norden was to prove very useful for the present study. Adolf Schlatter's *Wie sprach Josephus von Gott?* was published in 1910 and gives a detailed discussion of the various terms and semantic fields Josephus uses when he refers to God and which he therefore also uses in his prayer texts. Although Schlatter mentions prayer passages throughout the book, he does not explicitly refer to them as such. His analysis of the different terms used, however, is of great importance for anyone studying Josephus' theology.

C. *Prayer in Greek religion*

Over the years, several books and articles on prayer in classical (and especially Greek) religion have been published, three of which I should like to discuss. The earliest, 'Greek Prayers' by Kurt von Fritz, was published in 1945. He starts by saying that in all the works that have been published over the years concerning Greek religion and prayer,

[11] Norden, *Agnostos*, 240–276.

one important aspect has been overlooked, namely that prayer expresses the characteristic relationship between the individual praying and the deity.[12] The main point of his article, is the discussion on the difference between Greek religion and other religions with which we are familiar and the way this shows in the prayers.

The main difference as von Fritz sees it is the nature of the Greek gods, who are much more similar to human beings than is the case in most other religions; however, there always remains a distance between man and god: humans have no passionate longing to become one with the god or to communicate on an intimate level; moreover, the gods cannot penetrate into "the innermost core and kernel" of the human being.[13] This is reflected in the prayers. Owing to the gulf between god and man, Greek religion lacks certain practices that are often considered "the highest form of prayers" and that other religions have, such as meditation.[14]

Yet, in other ways, Greek gods are closer to human beings, precisely because gods and humans are so similar. As a result of the relationship of mutual liking between gods and humans, sacrifices changed in nature from being one side of a bargain to rendering homage. The same is true of prayers, which ceased to be mere requests for favours, and became more subtle, with only a suggestion that the god had an obligation towards the human praying.[15]

Von Fritz also describes the close relation between prayers and hymns, hymns being poetry that is sacrificed to the gods, as are other kinds of dramatic expression (tragedies, satires and other types of plays), performances of which could be understood as offerings.[16]

The main conclusion of the article is that human beings have to work out their own salvation: they can pray to the gods and ask them for goods or assistance, but ultimately, a man is responsible for his own actions and the chain of cause and effect that can be set in motion because of those actions. The article ends with a few brief remarks on Stoic and Epicurean ideas on prayer.

As for the study of prayer in the work of Josephus, the article may be helpful because of several issues that are discussed in it, that also

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[12] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 5.
[13] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 14.
[14] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 16.
[15] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 16–23.
[16] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 23–28.

arise in Josephus' work, such as hymns and the question what to pray for. Another merit of the article is that it alerts the reader to the necessity of investigating the relationship between the person praying and the god he prays to.

The volume, *Faith, Hope and Worship* (1981), on the religious mentality in antiquity, is introduced by Henk Versnel with an article entitled 'Religious mentality in ancient prayer'. He attempts to give an impression of certain aspects of prayer, the attitude towards prayer and the mentality which emerges from prayer. He chooses the prayer of the 'common man', as opposed to prayers by, for example, heroes or great writers.[17]

Firstly, Versnel discusses prayer expressing wishes, comparing them with questions put to the oracles. These prayers and questions tell us the day-to-day worries of the common man. One problem that might arise was the question, to which god or group of gods the prayer should be directed, because different gods were active in different domains; this resulted in some peculiarities in invocations when one was not sure which god to turn to: so many gods were invoked, or just one, indicated by several predicates to achieve more precision.[18]

Two other aspects of prayer mentality are what Versnel calls *Gebetsegoismus* (egotism in prayer), that is, the fact that people prayed for themselves ("I pray for myself and my masters"), and the aggressive forms of prayer in which people asked for evil to be removed from their own sphere to someone else's; since people should be careful what to ask for, it was safest to leave it to the god himself to decide ("I ask this, but if it is not possible, I hope we can have something else"). Prayers that contained malicious wishes were preferably only murmured or even prayed in silence as opposed to the more common praying out loud.[19]

Next, Versnel turned to the issue of hearing: to attract the attention of the gods, people used invocations or imperatives such as κλῦθι, ἄκουε or *audi* ('hear').[20] When the gods listened, people expressed their gratitude either with presents or with prayers. Even though it was previously thought that such prayers were scarce in Greek literature, Versnel has shown us the terminology to look out for; not so much χάρις, but forms of (ἔπ)αινος and ἐπαινεῖν, praise. It was with praise that people

[17] Versnel, 'Religious', 2.
[18] Versnel, 'Religious', 4–17.
[19] Versnel, 'Religious', 17–26.
[20] Versnel, 'Religious', 26–42.

thanked the gods and this could be expressed by proclaiming great deeds or by offering a prayer, hymn or poem as a sacrifice, just as, for example, craftsmen or peasants offered up their work to thank a god (or a human benefactor).[21]

Von Fritz and Versnel treat different aspects of Greek prayer that also occur in Josephus' prayers; moreover, a closer look at the next book to be discussed again shows the close similarities between Josephus' prayers and various aspects of Greek prayers.

In his book, *Prayer in Greek Religion*, published in 1996, Simon Pulleyn discusses Greek prayer as a part of Greek life. To do so, he uses literary evidence, although he is aware of the possibly doubtful legitimacy of using literary evidence in a historical study. His book therefore includes a table of words commonly used in prayer, derived from both literary and epigraphic sources.

As a working assumption Pulleyn defines prayers as articulate requests directed towards the gods.[22] In this way he is able to discuss a wide range of subjects concerning prayer, with many examples.

In his introductory chapter, Pulleyn observes that most references to prayer mention a cultic act that accompanies the prayer. The underlying idea is that when a person wants to ask something from a god, he has to give as well as take; this is especially clear in the works of historians and orators. References to free prayer (prayer without a sacrifice) seem to be more common in epics and drama, but most of the time prayer was not autonomous: it relied on sacrifice.[23]

The central thesis of the book is the importance of χάρις in Greek prayer, which he defines as 'reciprocity'. In the second chapter, he discusses how to obtain things from a god. There are examples of prayers without a sacrifice and Pulleyn discusses different kinds of formulae for making bargains with gods, which still retain an element of χάρις, such as *da-ut-dem* (the promise to give something when the request is granted) or *da-quia-dedi* (a reference to a gift made in the past). The main part of the chapter concerns prayers based on εἴ ποτε, 'if ever' ("If ever I have built a temple for you, fulfil for me this wish").[24]

In the chapter concerning thanks and praise, Pulleyn shows that these kinds of prayer are also about reciprocity and χάρις, especially where hymns are concerned: these may serve as an offering (or ἄγαλμα),

[21] Versnel, 'Religious', 42–62.
[22] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 6.
[23] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 7–15.
[24] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 17–38.

which generates χάρις. He discusses hymns at length in this chapter and compares the language of hymns with that of prayers.[25]

Prayers in which the god is not offered a *quid pro quo* are prayers of supplication in which the petitioner "more or less throws himself on the mercy of the deity".[26] Pulleyn discusses the Greek words referring to supplication, such as ἱκετεύω and λίσσομαι. Prayers to avert danger also fall into this category, prayers in times of crisis, when there is no time to perform a sacrifice. But even prayers of this type are not wholly free from the idea of reciprocity, since there are frequent references to sacrifices made in the past, or a promise to offer one in the near future because, as Pulleyn says, "It would make nonsense of a reciprocal system if there were some means by which people could regularly expect to obtain something for nothing".[27]

Other phenomena Pulleyn describes are curses (both the ones made publicly and those made secretly), magic and the importance of mentioning names and attributes, and prayers made to the dead (both to the ordinary dead and to heroes). After an examination of the structure of petitionary prayer and the specific language that has been used (such as vocatives, verbs of coming or hearing and imperatives), in chapter nine he arrives at the *Sitz im Leben* of prayer. First he discusses where and when prayers were performed: there was no liturgy of the hours, but there were prayers at dawn and dusk, all sacrificial. Other instances that called for prayer were before battle or military endeavours, when coming home (like Odysseus, for instance, when he returns to Ithaca) or when passing a divine statue or some other holy place. Then he discusses 'Locale and Officiant', treating questions such as how one should perceive a group prayer and whether women and slaves prayed; moreover, he discusses certain parts of the ritual (the purely feminine ὀλολύγη, the paean and the εὐφημία, which is the sacred situation that is required to start the prayer). He closes the chapter with a discussion of the conduct of prayer, praying out loud and in silence, and gestures and attitudes during prayer.[28]

The final chapter concerns what the Greeks themselves actually had to say about prayer, their complaints in case of failure (if the gods did not listen or failed to fulfil the request) and their thoughts on what

[25] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 39–55.
[26] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 56.
[27] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 69.
[28] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 156–195.

the gods should do or how they should respond.[29] Moreover, Pulleyn discusses a subject Versnel had already referred to, namely 'accommodation': accommodating oneself to the will of the gods and letting them decide what is best.[30]

The book also contains two appendices, of which the first has proved to be especially useful for the present study, namely, the list of common words in Greek prayers, with references to both literary and epigraphic sources.

D. *Biblical prayer*

Let us now consider biblical prayer. Numerous books have been written on prayer in the Old Testament, but the one that is most relevant to our purposes is *Biblical Prose Prayer* by Moshe Greenberg (1983). Since this little book concerns the prayers in the biblical narrative, rather than psalms and liturgical prayers, it is interesting to read it against the background of a study of Josephus' prayers, which are also embedded in narrative (and even, for the most part biblical narrative).

Greenberg's book is a collection of three lectures he held as Taubman professor in Berkeley. He has studied the biblical prose prayers, expecting them to be a mirror of the commoners' religion (rather than temple rituals and psalms). He asks two questions, whether they reflect forms of prayer that were actually used in ancient Israel and whether the prayer texts served the narratives. In his first lecture, he discusses petitionary prayer as being the most frequently used and describes how it differs from institutionalised prayer in that it is not conditioned by any specific times, places or persons; it may be formed by anyone according to his own need; and it mostly follows a simple pattern of address, petition and motivation. The content, he says, is tailored to the circumstances and consequently such prayers cannot be reused. He concludes that embedded prayers play a part in the argument of the narrative and depiction of character.[31] This latter point, in particular, which he also discusses in his third lecture, touches closely on the subject I shall discuss in Chapter 4, the literary function of prayers.

In his second lecture he discusses the question of whether all of the above is a literary convention or whether actual practice is reflected.

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[29] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 196–207.
[30] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 207–215.
[31] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 1–18.

He compares prayer language to analogous speech patterns; the petitionary prayer is compared to petitionary addresses to kings or other powerful persons. He then turns to the confessional element in prayers and the expressions of gratitude and concludes that the biblical narrators all portrayed speech between humans and God on the analogy of speech between humans. While he recognises that the literary evidence has been shaped, he says that there is no reason to suppose that it is all merely a literary invention: "Why should biblical authors over the centuries have placed speeches in the mouth of their characters that had no verisimilitude, not even in principle?"[32]

The third lecture is devoted to discussions in recent scholarship on the dichotomy between spontaneous, free invention of prayers and preformulated, prescribed ones. Greenberg argues, however, that this dichotomy does not do justice to the evidence, and that it fails to recognise the fact that spontaneity and prescription blend (as they do in all social behaviour) and that there is a form between the set ritual prayer and the freely invented, namely, the patterned prayer-speech described above.[33]

Greenberg shows that the study of these prayers is useful for the study of the narrative art of the scriptures, and discusses the fact that "Israelite Everyman" prayed repeatedly, sustaining the vivid reality of God's presence in his mind. He ends his lecture by saying that if people wanted to find favour in God's eyes, they had to identify with God by imitating his moral conduct: morality was more important than specific forms of worship.[34]

E. *Prayer in the Second Temple Period*

Of even greater relevance to the study of prayer in Josephus are a number of books on prayer in the Second Temple Period. One of the first in this field was Norman Johnson's 1948 monograph, *Prayer in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. A study on the Jewish concept of God*. Johnson approaches the subject comprehensively and systematically. In three chapters he deals with the aims of prayers, the means of inducing God and the various responses to prayers. Every section contains a host of examples, which makes the book a useful resource for anyone study-

[32] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 19–37.
[33] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 38–46.
[34] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 46–57.

ing prayer in narrative texts. His summary refers back to his intention of studying the Jewish concept of God with reference to certain basic tenets about God such as his omnipotence, omniscience, immanence and omnipresence; his anthropomorphic traits and two of his fundamental qualities, namely, mercy and justice.

A book published by Judith Newman in 1999 introduced a wholly new approach to the study of prayer. In her monograph, *Praying by the Book*, Newman states her intention of shedding light on the relationship of prayer to biblical traditions: she investigates the so-called 'scripturalization' of prayer, scripturalization being defined as the reuse of biblical texts or interpretive traditions to shape the composition of new literature.[35] In her introduction Newman presents a well balanced and uncontroversial definition of prayer.[36] This gives her book added merit, given the disagreement on a definition so far.[37]

In the first chapter, Newman aims to relate the origins and development of scripturalization. To do so, she discusses several prayers, both pre-exilic and exilic. She concludes by saying that the process of scripturalization started as a remembrance of figures or events from the past, for example, Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32, which draws on wording from an earlier period, in this case, God's promises to his father. This beginning was followed by two crucial steps: first, when the person praying chose to draw not on his own life experience but on an event from the traditional history of the people; for instance, prayers in the Book of Deuteronomy referring to Israel's liberation from slavery. The second crucial step was taken when earlier traditions were regarded as written scripture and were adopted to be preserved and sometimes even revised in the light of new theological ideas. The prayer by Solomon in 1 Kings 8 illustrates this second step.[38]

After this introduction, Newman argues that authors of post-exilic prayers used scripture for different purposes. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 each analyse one method of scripturalization, each using one prayer as illustration. Firstly, Nehemiah 9: 5–37 shows how scripturalization was used to recall history: to show a shared historical memory.[39] Next,

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[35] Newman, *Praying*, 12–13.

[36] "Prayer is address to God that is initiated by humans; it is not conversational in nature; and it includes address to God in the second person, although it can include third person description of God", Newman, *Praying*, 6.

[37] See also my definition, pp. 20–23.

[38] Newman, *Praying*, 19–54.

[39] Newman, *Praying*, 55–116.

Judith's prayer in Judith 9 illustrates the use of scripture for typological exemplars: the author of Judith modelled characters and patterned narratives after biblical prototypes.[40] Finally, the prayer by the high priest Simon in 3 Maccabees 2 shows that the Bible was also used as a source of moral (or even immoral) examples (exemplary biblical characters and virtues/vices or specific actions by individuals): biblical ancestors to commemorate or to keep people from bad behaviour.[41]

In the final chapter, her investigation is linked to the study of liturgy, both Jewish and Christian. Newman claims that scripturalization eventually became an unquestioned literary convention in the composition of liturgy. She touches on the subject of the changing role of prayer in regard to sacrifice, and goes on to discuss the continuities with Jewish and Christian liturgy in the use of language and motives. Her overall conclusion is that scriptural tradition became an integral part of prayers early in Israel's history and ultimately in Jewish and Christian liturgies. The book closes with an appendix, presenting a selective history of scholarship on prayer and liturgy.

The Society of Biblical Literature working group 'Prayer in the Greco-Roman Period', resulted in the publication of two volumes. The first volume, published in 1994, entitled, *The Lord's Prayer and other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era*, was edited by James Charlesworth, Mark Harding and Mark Kiley. The volume contains a few short articles (among which two on prayers in Josephus' work, which will be discussed later); the most useful part is the extensive bibliography that lists some 2000 titles of publications concerning prayer in the various fields of the Graeco-Roman period. The most extensive categories are scholarship on prayers in Jewish texts and on prayers in the New Testament, but Hebrew, magical, gnostic and many other texts have also been considered.[42]

The second volume, *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine. A critical anthology*, edited (and introduced) by Mark Kiley, was published three years later, in 1997. It contains over 50 articles on just as many prayer texts, divided into three groups: Judaica, Greeks and Romans, and Christian traditions.

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[40] Newman, *Praying*, 117–154.
[41] Newman, *Praying*, 155–200.
[42] The list of titles on prayer in Graeco-Roman texts is very short; a far more extensive bibliography on this subject can be found in G. Freyburger, L. Pernot, *Bibliographie analytique de la prière grecque et romaine (1898–1998)*, Turnhout 2000.

There are many books on prayer in Judaism that deserve attention but are too far beyond the scope of the present study to discuss here in detail, for instance, those primarily concerned with liturgical prayers (as opposed to prayers in a narrative), like the works of Bilhah Nitzan (*Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, 1994) or Daniel Falk (*Daily, Sabbath and Festival-Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1998). Jutta Leonhardt's *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (2001) has an extensive section on prayer in Philo, but she also focuses primarily on liturgical prayer. The same may be said of *Prayer in the Talmud*, by Joseph Heinemann (1977) and *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer* by Stefan Reif (1993).

Also useful, but in no need of further discussion, are two introductory articles: the first by James Charlesworth, 'Jewish Hymns, Odes and Prayers', in *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters* (edited by Kraft and Nickelsburg, 1986); the second by David Flusser, entitled 'Psalms, Hymns and Prayers' in Stone's *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (1984).

F. *Prayer in the works of Josephus*

To date, there have been five publications on the subject of prayer in the works of Josephus, all articles. I will discuss these articles in chronological order and assess them in the light of the present study.

The first article on Josephus and prayer was that by S. Hahn in 1950, entitled 'Josephus on Prayer in C. Ap. II 197 §'. The article focuses on the second part of the passage in *Contra Apionem* in which Josephus says that people should not beg God to give good things (since he has already given them), but that they "may be able to assume and to keep the benefits". Hahn says that we may notice the polemic antagonism to the common Greek view of prayer, but that the polemy is not Jewish in origin, either. The Jewish concept of prayer, Hahn says, is that prayer should follow general and abstract formulas, because people do not know where their real interests lie.

Whereas the Greek and Jewish concepts are commonly theocentric in character, Josephus' is, as Hahn puts it, "subjective-anthropocentric". What is lacking in Josephus' concept is belief in a God who can be influenced by the wishes of men and the belief that God continually intervenes in their lives. The good things have been given by God, unprompted by any prayer.

As we see, Hahn does not see any parallels to Josephus' view in Greek and Jewish thought, but he does find a parallel in one of Horace's odes.

Horace asks what may be requested of the gods and says that one may not ask for new benefits, but only to be enabled to keep existing ones.[43] The ideas Horace expresses in this ode are derived from Cynic philosophy (Hahn draws upon Reichnitz here), more particularly, he has been influenced by the Cynic Bion. Hahn continues that Josephus, too, was influenced by Cynic thinking in the above statement about prayer. He goes on to say that according to Heinemann there were Jewish diatribes that were influenced by Cynic ideas on religion, such as those dealing with the interpretation of the Jewish feasts. Hahn thinks that such a diatribe or similar passage must have been Josephus' source.[44]

The *Contra Apionem* passage on prayer will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. While Hahn is, of course, correct in seeing a parallel with Horace, and Josephus may very well be drawing on Cynic thinking here, in my opinion it is too limiting to focus only on the influence of the Cynics. As we shall see in the next chapter, Josephus incorporated a great deal of contemporary Hellenistic philosophy in this passage, not only that of the Cynics. Moreover, he also used ideas that were common to Judaism and to Gnosticism at this time. Yet Hahn touched on an important subject in that Josephus did not use only Jewish thinking in his writing on prayer. One of the objectives of the present study is to investigate this further and to extend the investigation to other prayer material in Josephus' work.

The next article to appear was that by Willem van Unnik. He wrote an article on the first sections of Solomon's second prayer at the dedication of the Temple, AJ 8.111–113, calling it a "curious liturgical passage" (*eine merkwürdige liturgische Aussage*). Van Unnik says that the passage is interesting for its phraseology. He discusses three elements that figure in it, starting with thanksgiving. It was widely felt among the Greeks that when you have received a gift, you must show gratitude with a return gift. Examples of this are to be found in Diodorus Siculus and Plato, as well as in Josephus' own work. But Solomon says people should not give thanks with deeds or actions, because God is ἀπροσδεής and because he is above that kind of exchange.

Secondly, Van Unnik discusses Josephus' statement that instead of thanking with deeds, people should thank God with that faculty in the possession of which they are superior to other creatures: the voice.

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[43] See also the discussion of section 197 in Chapter 2, pp. 43–44.
[44] Hahn, 'Josephus'.

In classical literature the connection between deed and word is well known. Mostly, if deed and word do not agree, preference is given to the deed. But, Van Unnik says, Josephus turns that round here: it is more appropriate to thank God with the word than the deed.

Next, Van Unnik points to Josephus' use of the word φωνή (voice) instead of λόγος (word): 'voice' must have suited Josephus better. Van Unnik also refers to Josephus' version of the creation story, where the snake's voice was taken away. Josephus' statement that the voice comes from the air is similar to Stoic thinking, which says that the voice is made out of air.[45]

Van Unnik further compares Josephus to Philo, who also thinks that God must be thanked with the voice: that is, with hymns and prayers. Van Unnik says that both stand within the scope of Diaspora Judaism in this respect, where the sacrifice came to be replaced by prayer. Both express popular thought in their time. The question remains whether Josephus derived his ideas directly from Hellenistic philosophy or the Hellenistic synagogue. Van Unnik believes that it was probably from the synagogue, since Philo had previously expressed similar thoughts. In any case, he says, Josephus formulated his idea independently. Van Unnik regards this passage as important in liturgical history for its contribution to our knowledge of the first-century concept of prayer.[46]

Like Hahn, Van Unnik touched on the interesting subject of Josephus' use of Hellenistic thinking; again like Hahn, Van Unnik only discussed a small part of the relevant passages. A more complete study of Josephus' prayers is necessary to clarify this picture. Only then may we be in a position to contribute to what Van Unnik terms "enriching our knowledge of the first-century concept of prayer".[47]

Mark Harding recognised the gap in the literature on prayer in Josephus' work in his introduction to the bibliography in *The Lord's Prayer*.[48] He made a start on filling this gap with two articles concerning a number of prayers in Josephus' work.

The first of these appeared in the same volume. In 'Making old things new: prayer texts in Josephus' *Antiquities* 1–11', Harding discusses six prayers, intending to offer an analysis of the theology and apologetics of these prayers. He starts by questioning what Josephus' theology of

[45] See pp. 164–165.
[46] Unnik, 'Eine merkwürdige'.
[47] Van Unnik, 'Eine merkwürdige', 369.
[48] Harding, 'Lord's', 108.

prayer is. First he discusses the absence of prayer content in *Vita* and next refers to the *Contra Apionem* passage as an illustration of the place of prayer in Judaism. His attitude in writing it, according to Harding, was quite different to the general view of prayer as approaching the divinity 'contractually' with a request; Josephus' attitude was affirmed by his "cultivated, philosophically aware audience".[49]

Harding asks what we may learn from investigating the prayers: do they reflect Josephus' apologetic intent or do they derive from prayers that were actually in use in the first-century synagogue? In either case, he says, the prayers should be compared to early Jewish and Greek prayers.

The six prayers to be discussed were chosen by Harding because they were written in direct speech. The rest of the first eleven books of *Antiquitates*, Harding says, contain only summaries of the prayer content, even though many of them were written in reported speech in the Bible. He offers a list of such summarised prayers in an extensive footnote. Apart from the six prayers, he says, there are four others in which brief quotations are included. In his opinion, however, these are too short to discuss in any depth.

Next, Harding discusses the six prayers.[50] With every prayer he treats some aspects that stand out, such as the forms of address in Isaac's prayer,[51] the reference to divine providence in Moses' prayer at the sea, Josephus' portrayal of Moses as a statesman in his prayer during the rebellion of Korah, the role of God in Joshua's prayer, and the philosophical terms and ideas in both of Solomon's prayers at the consecration of the temple. He concludes with four observations. Firstly, he points out that Josephus was a literate Jew in a Hellenistic milieu, and that this enabled him to represent the history and ideas of Israel in such a way that his non-Jewish readers understood and respected the traditions. Secondly, Josephus' writing was in line with the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition, rejecting the notion of a contract between God and man, avoiding the anthropomorphisms of the Bible and using (Stoic) philosophical terminology. Thirdly, Josephus made sure that nothing he wrote would reinforce Greek or Roman prejudice against

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[49] Harding, 'Making', 55.

[50] AJ 1.272–273 (Isaac); 2.335–337 (Moses); 4.40–50 (Moses); 5.38–41 (Joshua); 8.107–108, 111–117 (Solomon).

[51] δεσπότης (master) and δημιουργός (creator); see also my discussion on pp. 66–70.

"Semitic superstition", yet he did not write anything that would not bear scrutiny in terms of Talmud or Mishnah. Finally, Harding stresses that Josephus nowhere uses the (Jewish) *eulogētos* formula.

Although Harding's article is broader than the previous two, some further comments need to be made. His suggestion that (some of) these prayers may actually have been used in the first-century synagogue[52] remains unsubstantiated. As he himself says, the prayers are literary compositions, focused on the situation in which the person praying finds himself. I therefore believe that the prayers must in the first place be seen as narrative and not as liturgical elements.

There are two places in his article in which Harding forgets an important prayer, namely, Josephus' own prayer in BJ 3.354. He does not mention it when he discusses the absence of Josephus' own prayer practice in *Vita* nor when he speaks of the prayers in reported speech; he mentions only the ten prayers in *Antiquitates*. The prayer may not be in *Antiquitates*, but it must at least be mentioned.

Finally, Harding draws his conclusions on the basis of these six prayers. This is, however, too limited a basis and his views on invocations may well change once he investigates more texts (most importantly David's prayer in AJ 7.380–381, which he disregards because it is only summarised). Moreover, although Josephus does not actually use the expression εὐλόγητος ('blessed be') literally, there are several instances in which he says that people blessed God, using the verb εὐλογεῖν (to bless or praise).[53] Harding's discussion of the individual prayers is a very good start but, as he himself says, further study is necessary.

In the same volume, Agnetha Enermalm-Ogawa also devotes an article to Josephus, concentrating on the paraphrase of 1 Maccabees in AJ 12–13. Enermalm compares the two texts and sees that Josephus has elaborated and embellished the speeches with regard to 1 Maccabees, but that he reduced the prayers "to short passages almost negligible in the flow of narrative".[54] In the *Antiquitates* account there are only five prayers, whereas 1 Maccabees has quite a few. Enermalm concludes that Josephus obviously prefers speeches to prayers. Her purpose is to study how Josephus' speeches and prayers differ from 1 Maccabees and to determine what functions the prayers have in Josephus' narrative.

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[52] Harding, 'Making', 56, 59.
[53] AJ 1.181; 7.380, 381; 8.110, 119; 9.15.
[54] Enermalm, 'Josephus', 73.

Enermalm then discusses the narrative in the two accounts, but hardly touches on the prayers (not surprisingly, given the small amount of prayer material in the text). The only prayer that is of interest to her is the prayer by Mattathias, spoken on his deathbed, after his farewell speech. It is especially interesting in conjunction with the speech, because the prayer intensifies the content of the speech: the focus on the destiny (the restoration) of the nation. Moreover, the combination of speech and prayer in her opinion enhances the stature of Mattathias and lends him prophetic features. The other prayers are all short and plain, and they do not contribute to the narrative: "they evidence in a clear and convincing way God's actions in history".[55]

She also briefly discusses the use of hymns, but the most interesting part of her article is the conclusion, in which she explains the differences between the use of prayer by Josephus and the author of 1 Maccabees. She says that the basic difference is 'representational'. Josephus presents his story more strictly as a narrative, whereas the author of 1 Maccabees includes more poetry, speeches and prayers. She says that Josephus prefers more indirect discourse, which results in prayers written with an infinitive construction introduced by *euxamenos*. Speeches are another matter: they belong to the genre of historiography. According to Enermalm, Josephus uses speeches to convey religious convictions. In short, her conclusion is that Josephus likes to keep it straight and simple, hence no prayers, for they imply exposition and embellishment.

Another difference Enermalm touches on in her conclusion is the difference in the way the two understand history. Whereas for the author of 1 Maccabees the story has a relation to the past and to people who have memory of it, Josephus thinks of the future when he tells his history, which is supposed to be of universal importance. Enermalm says that prayers can better serve a historical perspective, emphasizing the particularity of events, than serve the idea of history as a process. This is why, she argues, Josephus does without prayer in his paraphrase of 1 Maccabees. Finally she points to the apologetic aim of *Antiquitates*, which also explains the absence of prayers, since these are not such appropriate tools for argumentation. Moreover, as Bilde says, apologetics make Josephus' narrative 'topical'. This may also explain their use, according to Enermalm, since "prayers do not deal with topics, but speeches do".[56]

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[55] Enermalm, 'Josephus', 79.
[56] Enermalm, 'Josephus', 81.

The main problem with Enermalm's article is her lack of material. She selected a passage from Josephus' work which contains hardly any prayers and, while it is, of course, interesting to speculate why Josephus reduced the number of prayers in this particular part of his work, I do not think that it is correct to generalise on the basis of this passage and conclude that Josephus does not like to use prayer. This conclusion disregards all the other places where Josephus *does* use prayers and where he also wants to be factual and straight. I do not have an explanation for the absence of prayers in *Antiquitates* 12 and 13, but I think that it is impossible to explain without looking at all the other instances in Josephus' work in which prayer has been used. To conclude that Josephus preferred to use speeches to convey his religious convictions totally overlooks, in my opinion, the numerous examples of prayers in which Josephus does convey religious thought.[57] Moreover, the function she attributes to the prayers (they "converge to affirm that, in the development of history, *God is acting*" (*it.* Enermalm)) does not do justice to the whole of the prayer material in Josephus' work.[58]

Finally, Mark Harding's second article on the subject was published in the volume, *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine*.[59] After an introduction to Josephus and his works, Harding returns to one of the six prayers discussed in the previous article, Moses' prayer at the shores of the Red Sea. He says that Moses (as well as the patriarchs and the other great Jewish heroes) are portrayed in Josephus' work as enlightened, virtuous and venerable. This also shows in their conception of God. In Moses' prayer God is regarded as totally sovereign: he is "Master of the Universe". From Moses' invocation of God as ally and helper, we learn that there is confidence that God will help: not because of a contract, but because of his *providence*. Here Harding recaptures Attridge's exposition on this (originally Hellenistic, philosophical) idea in Josephus' work, which is prominent in this prayer. Harding also points to the prominence given to this idea by early Jewish and Christian authors writing in Greek, who, according to Harding, gave their own interpretation to it.

Harding next discusses the literary context of the prayer. He says that it contrasts the fear and despair of the Israelites on the shore of the Sea to the providence (care) of God, who will deliver them miraculously.

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[57] See Chapters 5 and 6 of the present study.
[58] See Chapter 4.
[59] Harding, 'The prayer of Moses in Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.335–7'.

Finally Harding wonders about the effect of Josephus' prayers and suggests that, regarding the popularity of Josephus' work in early Christian circles, they may have served as "fruitful models for early Christian expressions of spirituality".[60] He thinks so because Josephus and the early Christians share the use of philosophical terminology. Harding ends his article with a translation of the prayer, with some references and minor remarks in footnotes.

This article leads Harding to a more detailed discussion of the prayer than in his first article on prayers in Josephus. Although I am not convinced by all his conclusions, the article presents a good study of the prayer, doing justice to its content and place in the text.

All five of these articles highlight interesting aspects of prayer in Josephus' work. However, they all show that there is much work still to be done on the subject. In-depth study of Josephus' prayers will not only further our understanding of Josephus and his way of writing history, but perhaps also of first-century Judaism. I hope that the present study will be seen as a good start.

II. What is Prayer?

Much has been written about prayer. Many of the books on the subject fail to provide a definition. Everyone has an idea of what prayer is; why define it? So I thought when I started working on prayer in Josephus. But on reading Josephus' work and trying to compile a list of prayers, more and more instances emerged that could not obviously be distinguished as prayers. We all know that a person who reaches his hands to heaven and calls, "Oh God, will you help us in this time of distress?", is praying. But there are doubtful cases. For instance, Moses often converses with God: but is this always a prayer? Is any communication with God 'prayer'? And when people curse, or express a wish ("May God do this or that"), are these prayers? Is any wish that involves a supernatural intervention a prayer? It was obvious that a definition was needed in order to include or exclude texts systematically.

English dictionaries give many definitions under the heading of 'prayer': prayer is "a solemn request to God or an object of worship".[61]

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[60] Harding, 'The prayer', 96.
[61] Concise Oxford Dictionary of current English, 1995.

Or "a humble entreaty addressed to God, to a god, etc."[62] Or they tell us that prayers are not only addresses to God, but to kings or other persons as well. Moreover, they point out correctly that a prayer may take the form not only of an address (with text) but also of a mere gesture.

In her book, Judith Newman gives an overview of the definitions of prayer formulated by several authors.[63] She starts by discussing a definition by Edwin Staudt, who wrote a dissertation on prayer in the Deuteronomist. Its main parameters are: prayer is articulated communication with God, initiated by people, motivated by a situation of fear, confusion and uncertainty, and it results in significant implication.[64] Newman regards this definition as insufficient, among other reasons because it concerns only prayer in a narrative context: in her opinion it overemphasizes contextual aspects of prayer. Although this fits most kinds of prayer we find in Josephus' works, it does not seem to cover all; prayers are also prayers when there is no answer. Moreover, thanking God is not covered by this definition, either.

The definition by Esther Chazon is too broad. She says that prayer is any form of communication directed at God.[65] But, as we already discussed above, there are plenty of instances in which our feeling tells us that Abraham or Moses are not praying, but rather communicating with God by way of a conversation.[66]

Moshe Greenberg says that prayer is "nonpsalmic speech to God (…) expressing dependence, subjection or obligation; it includes petition, confession, benediction and curse".[67] Newman does not comment on this one, except to include it under the definitions that are 'too broad'. I agree with her (confession does not need to be a prayer), but I think that 'expressing dependence' is an important aspect that should be included in a (more specific) definition.

Then she goes on to discuss Samuel Balentine's attempt. He does not offer a definition at all: he discusses the problems of other people's definitions such as Corvin ("all communication addressed to God in the second person") and Reventlow ("speech of a person or community of

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[62] Webster New 20th Century Dictionary, 1971.
[63] Newman, *Praying*, 5–7.
[64] Staudt, *Prayer*, 66.
[65] Chazon, 'Prayers', 266.
[66] See for instance Gen 18:16–32; Exod 5:22–6:12 and AJ 2.270–271.
[67] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 7.

persons that brings before God their fundamental or current situation") and rejects these as too broad yet also too limited.[68] He also refers to Staudt's definition and takes from it a usable element: intentionality, i.e. explicit communication.

After discussing these definitions, Newman arrives at her own, containing three criteria: "Prayer is address to God that is initiated by humans; it is not conversational in nature; and it includes address to God in the second person, although it can include third person description of God".[69]

As it turns out, this definition has proved to be the most workable one, and one which is now accepted by many authors who work on prayer. I have also retained this definition, but I would like to add the element found in the definition by Moshe Greenberg, and that is, that the address expresses dependence upon God.[70] People ask God for something or beseech him to do something, but they can also express their worries, fear, anger or gratitude; they would not do so if they did not think that God had anything to do with what happened to them: that he could change things, or that he could be blamed for what happened.

Another element that I would like to add comes from Miller, who wrote on the form and theology of biblical prose prayer. He does not offer an extended definition, but describes when he thinks prayer is in place: "on those occasions when human beings, at their initiative, address God with some sort of need and in hopes of divine response".[71] When people turn to God, they expect him to respond: not necessarily with words, but with action. Adding this element to the definition seems to exclude thanksgiving. However, for Josephus thanksgiving is the most important element of the daily prayer, and he says that it is "to incite the recipient of the thanksgiving to bestow further benefits in the future".[72] In other words, according to Josephus, with thanksgiving, too, the person praying is expecting a response.

When we study prayer in a particular author's work we must not forget that it is important to find out what the author himself has to

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[68] Balentine, *Prayer*, 30.
[69] Newman, *Praying*, 7.
[70] Greenberg, *Biblical*, 7.
[71] Miller, *They cried*, 4.
[72] AJ 4.212.

say about it. We may well define passages as prayers that were not intended as such by that author and vice versa, yet, since we are unlikely to ascertain exactly what the author thought, we have no choice but to work according to our own definitions. While it is true that Josephus wrote a passage about prayer in *Contra Apionem*, he merely wrote about the content of prayer and the proper attitude; Josephus probably never thought about 'prayer' as a concept to define and distinguish from other forms of communication with God. However, even if we are not able to determine Josephus' own definition, I still think it is interesting to see how he handled instances of what we would now define as prayer.

III. The Corpus of Prayers

The list at the end of this book includes 134 prayers which were collected by reading through Josephus' work, and by checking Rengstorff's concordance. The list is probably as good as exhaustive, but it is of course always possible that one or more texts eluded my eye. In this paragraph I will explain how I came to identify these 134 prayers, and how I selected the 32 to be dealt with in detail.

First, the complete list came about by reading Josephus' work in parallel with his source texts (if known and extant), so as to make an inventory of prayer texts and to determine the extent to which these texts were prompted by the source text or introduced by Josephus himself. By way of control, the concordance on Josephus was consulted for a wide variety of words for 'to pray' or 'prayer' (such as εὔχεσθαι and its derivatives).[73] All of the texts that came to light by close reading of Josephus' texts and the concordance were tested against the definition, and thus this list of 134 prayers was born. There are more small prayer references, but references without content were not included in the list.

It was a deliberate choice to include texts in both direct and indirect speech; if I had included only texts in direct speech, the result would have been rather meagre: there are only 11 prayers (two of which only partially) in direct speech. Also, and more importantly, whether a text is written in direct speech does not necessarily make any difference as to

[73] K.H. Rengstorff, *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, in 4 vols., Leiden 1973–1982.

the contents recorded in this text. Texts in indirect speech can contain as much interesting material. Equally, texts in direct speech can just as well be of minor interest.

Of these 134 prayer texts, 32 were singled out for closer investigation. They were selected according to several criteria: length, content and, if they had a parallel in a source text, the extent to which they differed from that source.

As for the prayers within a text for which a source text is known, those without a parallel in that source text were all included if of considerable length. Prayers without a parallel that were not included for extensive discussion were prayers for which no text was given, or simple standard formulae such as 'he asked God to take pity on the Hebrews', or 'they thanked God and did obeisance', which could be dealt with in the footnote of a prayer that was to be discussed. Of the prayers which did have a parallel in the source text, only those were discussed at length which differed from the prayer in the source text, and again, only if they were of considerable length.

There are not many prayers in those parts of Josephus' work for which there is no source text and these were mostly, moreover, very short and simple. Only four have been included in the discussion, two of which are in *De bello Judaico*. The remaining prayers in texts with no source text were of little interest, but they are all listed at the end of this book.

CHAPTER TWO

JOSEPHUS ON PRAYER

I. Prayer in the Law in *Contra Apionem*: CA 2.195–197[1]

> (193) There is one temple for the one God—for like is always dear to like—[a temple] common to all for a God common to all. Priests serve him continually, while they are led by the one who is the first in line. (194) He will sacrifice to God together with his fellow priests; he will safeguard the laws, judge in cases of dispute, and punish those who have been convicted. Anyone who does not obey him will undergo the penalty just as if he had been impious towards God himself. (195) We offer sacrifices not as an opportunity to get drunk—because that is not in accord with the will of God—but [we offer] for sobriety.[2] (196) And during the sacrifices one must first pray for common safety, and only after that for oneself, because we are born for the community; and he who prefers this to his own private affairs, is especially pleasing to God. (197) We should not beseech God to give good things, for he has already given them of his own accord and he has put them at the disposal of all; rather should we pray for the capacity to accept them and, having received them, to keep them. (198) Regarding sacrifices, the law has prescribed purifications after a funeral, after childbirth, after intercourse with a woman, and after many other occasions.

Sections 2.195–197 of *Contra Apionem* form part of a more comprehensive treatment of the law in the book. In sections 2.190–219 Josephus is concerned with the content of the law. But the discussion itself starts earlier, at 2.145, where he refers to Moses as a lawgiver and leader of the people, and relates how the law was established.

Christine Gerber divides *Contra Apionem* into three main parts, of which 2.145–296 constitutes the third.[3] The difference between this

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[1] An earlier draft of this section was published in: J.U. Kalms (ed.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Amsterdam 2000*, MJSt 10, Münster 2001, pp. 171–188. I have provided a translation of sections 2.193–198, which are entirely concerned with the sacrificial cult. However, only sections 2.195–197 are concerned with prayer per se and it is the content of these sections that forms the topic of the rest of this chapter.

[2] Schreckenberg postulates another, more comprehensive, version of 2.195; however I find no reason to reject Niese's text, which is also given in the Loeb edition, so I shall take the latter as my starting point. In any case the content is much the same.

[3] Gerber, *Bild*, 67–85. She also refers to divisions by other authors, 67 n. 19.

and the first two parts, she says, is that in this part Josephus is guided not by things other people have written about Judaism (and which he needs to refute), but by facts about Judaism itself.[4] He is eager to inform his readers about the Jewish constitution, first about the law and the lawgiver (sections 2.145–189), and then about the content of the law (sections 2.190–219). Then in sections 2.220–286 he compares and contrasts Jewish law with Greek laws and regulations, after which he closes the work (2.287–296).

The passage we are now concerned with belongs to the section of the book dealing with the content of Jewish law (2.190–219). Josephus begins this section with a discussion of the nature of God. He discusses God's qualities and being, and affirms that there is but one God (2.190–193). Because there is only one God, there is also only one Temple: just as God is common to all, so too is there one Temple common to all (2.193). The priests are continually engaged in worship and service to God. The priests perform sacrifices and they ensure that the law is observed and act as judges meting out punishment to those who fail to observe it (2.193–194). After his general description of God, the Temple, and its priests, Josephus goes on to explain specific ordinances. The topics covered are (in order): the regulations governing offerings (including prayer) (2.195–197); purity laws (2.198); and marriage laws, which here includes those governing relations between men and women (2.199–203). Josephus next discusses birth, education and funerals (2.204–205), and the attitudes people should have towards their fellow men—namely that they should honour their parents, be honest with their friends, and open-hearted towards strangers (2.206–214). He concludes by declaring that those who do not act in accordance with the law will be punished, but that those who do will be rewarded (2.215–9).

The discussion at 2.190–219 falls into three parts. These are concerned with: first, God and his worship; secondly, regulations concerning behaviour within the Jewish community; and thirdly, how Jews should behave towards non-Jews and animals. The regulations governing sacrifice and prayer are the first he considers. In contrast with his treatment of the law in *Antiquitates*,[5] however, where in dealing with the same topics Josephus' discussion tracks the order and content of the Torah's regulations scrupulously, in *Contra Apionem* his discussion

[4] Gerber, *Bild*, 85.
[5] AJ 3.102–187; 4.196–301.

does not follow the Torah's original presentation. In the latter book the order of presentation is Josephus' own—and often, as indeed we shall find with the passage about prayer, the content too is his own. The most likely explanation for this is that Josephus is here drawing on his own experience, whereas in *Antiquitates* he was working from a written source, namely the Torah.

A. *The passage*

1. *Sacrifice and drunkenness*

In section 2.195 Josephus is making a specific point about sacrifice: that it should not be used as an occasion to get drunk. Let us begin by considering the kind of sacrifice Josephus may be talking about.

There were different kinds of offerings, both public and private, according to the content and purpose of the sacrifice: first, there were burnt offerings, where the entire animal was burned on the altar; second, there were sin and guilt offerings, where only the fat was burned, and the meat eaten by the priests; and third, there were communion sacrifices, or peace offerings: here, too, only the fat was burned, but the meat was used by the worshipper himself for a sacrificial feast.[6] Josephus could be talking about such a feast in section 2.195, saying that at an event of this kind one should not get drunk, but be moderate. The word θυσία can also mean 'festival at which sacrifices were offered' and perhaps even 'sacrificial meal' (although this meaning is not given in Liddell & Scott), but at this point Josephus is talking about the Temple and Temple practice, so he is probably referring to sacrifices only and not to meals.[7]

Evidently Josephus disapproves of getting drunk during a sacrifice. This may go back to the Bible: in Leviticus 10:8–11 God forbids Aaron to drink wine or any other fermented beverage whenever he goes into the Tent of Meeting. However, there is nothing anywhere specifically forbidding people to get drunk *during the sacrifice itself*. Josephus may also be arguing against this practice because it was common for pagans to get drunk at sacrificial feasts, and he wants to emphasise that Jews are required to be different. Philo, who will be discussed later, makes a similar point.

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[6] Schürer/Vermes, *History*, 295.

[7] For more on communal meals in pagan, Jewish and Christian communities see Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl*.

In Josephus' day, and earlier, warnings against the consequences of drinking alcohol were quite common. In Plato's *Symposium* some of the guests want to go easy on the drinking on account of their hangovers from the night before. A doctor who is present says that drunkenness is harmful (χαλεπός) indeed. So the party agrees not to have a carousal, but to drink only for pleasure.[8] Xenophon relates that Socrates advised people to enjoy drinking wine, but only in moderation.[9] In one of his letters to Lucilius, Seneca also discusses drunkenness, calling it a voluntary state of insanity (*voluntaria insania*) and rejecting it on account of its after-effects: it removes all sense of shame and exposes men's vices, causes the body to malfunction, diminishes clear-headedness, and even leads to cruelty.[10] Plutarch advises against excessive eating and drinking, urging a middle way with regard to how much to drink: try not to get drunk, he says, but also not to bore your company. He adds that it is not good to drink when one is ill.[11]

In the New Testament, Jesus warns for drunkenness when he speaks about *eschata*—the final things;[12] and in one of his epistles Paul exhorts Christians to avoid drunkenness.[13] In both cases the reason given is that people must prepare themselves for the end of the world: they must not be drunk when the time comes. In Galatians 5:19, Paul sums up the works of the flesh (as opposed to the works of the spirit). Drunkenness is one of these, and people who indulge in such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Ephesians 5:18 warns people not to get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, but to be filled with the spirit instead. Finally, another Christian writer, the author of the Testament of Judah, points out the connection between drunkenness and sexual desire, explaining how as a result of being drunk he himself was overcome by lust for a Canaanite woman and revealed God's commandments to her. On another occasion he was so inebriated that shame did not prevent him from approaching a beautiful woman in a

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[8] Plato, *Symposium* 176a–e. This text seems to confirm, however, the idea that it was common to get drunk at feasts where sacrifices were offered, since the guests have hangovers from the party of the previous night, in the course of which a victory sacrifice was offered. However, this does not imply that people got drunk during the sacrifice itself.

[9] Xenophon, *Symposium* 2.24–26.

[10] Seneca, *Epistula* 83.

[11] Plutarch, *De tuenda sanitate* 124c; 132a–d.

[12] Luke 21:34.

[13] Rom 13:13.

public place to seek intercourse with her, failing even to recognise that she was his own widowed daughter-in-law.[14]

In Jewish literature too there are warnings against getting drunk, of which again none make any reference to sacrifice. For example, in Jesus Sirach's *Wisdom* the author urges his readers to exercise moderation in drinking wine. This, he says, leads to a joyful heart and a cheerful soul. By contrast, excessive drinking makes one become embittered, and indeed so angry that one will stumble.[15] Meanwhile Pseudo-Phocylides advises his readers to "eat in moderation, and drink and tell stories in moderation".[16] As these examples suggest, in the Hellenistic period it was common for thinkers to advise moderation in drinking and to warn against the perils of drunkenness. Thus Josephus was far from being alone in his concern. What was much less common, however, was the connection he made between the need to avoid drunkenness and religious sacrifices.

Another writer who condemned drunkenness was Philo of Alexandria. However, his outlook differed somewhat from that of other Hellenistic authors, and indeed had more affinity with Josephus'. In *De ebrietate* Philo says: "For surely it is seemly that men should come to prayers and holy services sober and with full control of themselves, just as on the other hand to come with both body and soul relaxed with wine is a matter for scorn and ridicule".[17] On the other hand in *De plantatione*, in answer to his own question as to whether wise men may get drunk, Philo goes so far as to explain that the word μεθύειν derives from μετὰ τὸ θύειν, meaning 'after having sacrificed'. He laments that whereas people formerly used to drink together for "relaxation and enjoyment", even in the Temple after worshipping, "nowadays" they get drunk at parties and banquets, and commit vicious acts, even biting off each other's noses and finger tips.[18]

Philo says that in his own day drunkenness is associated with the superficial excesses of banquets, and that this is not the kind of drunkenness with which he thinks the wise man should be associated. He also says, however, that being drunk is not necessarily incompatible

[14] *T. Jud.* 12–16. In its present form, The Testament of Judah is probably Christian and was probably written in the second half of the second century CE (Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 82–85).
[15] Sir 31:25–31.
[16] Pseudo-Phocylides 69.
[17] Philo, *De ebrietate* 138.
[18] Philo, *De plantatione* 160–163.

with moral excellence; on the contrary, "the wise man becomes a more genial person after indulging in wine than when he is sober (…) The countenance of wisdom is not scowling and severe, contracted by deep thought and depression of spirit, but on the contrary cheerful and tranquil, full of joy and gladness".[19]

Thus far Josephus and Philo agree on one point: that people should not get drunk during religious sacrifices. In Philo's view, however, drinking after the sacrifice in the manner people had done in earlier times was perfectly acceptable: the sacrifice was carried out by wise men and was an appropriate occasion for drinking. With regard to his own time, however, his view was that drinking had become harmfully excessive.

Regarding the next subject, Josephus and Philo may again be in agreement.

2. *About* σωφροσύνη

Josephus says that offerings should not be made in order to provide occasions for getting drunk, but for 'sobriety', σωφροσύνη. This word has a wide semantic range. One cluster of meanings includes everything having to do with wisdom: wise men are called σώφρονες. Another cluster of meanings again refers to wisdom, but with connotations of temperance. Apparently, wisdom and temperance were considered twins: wise people do not over-indulge but exhibit moderation.

Use of σωφροσύνη with the meaning 'sobriety' (as opposed to drunkenness) occurs in several other writers, among them Euripides, who uses the word several times in this way.[20] Critias, a Sophist of the fifth century BCE, praises Spartan moderation in drink, in contrast to the excess common among other Greeks.[21] Plato and the Christian Clement of Alexandria also use the word in this way.

When Plato discusses the ideal state in the first book of the *Laws*, he is presenting a new idea to the Dorian, which had always seen war as the natural condition of society, and who thought the law should aim at promoting manliness (ἀνδρεία). Plato wanted peace to be the normal condition of society, not ἀνδρεία, and he wanted legislation aimed at nurturing the peaceful virtues. The virtue of σωφροσύνη is one of these,[22] and in order to cultivate it Plato proposed the establishment of a

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[19] Philo, *De plantatione* 166, 167.
[20] North, *Sophrosyne*, 76.
[21] North, *Sophrosyne*, 95.
[22] Strangely enough, both ἀνδρεία and σωφροσύνη are among the four 'cardinal

new institution: the symposium. This was a kind of drinking party that tested the capacity of the young for self-restraint when the inhibitions of sobriety are lifted. To Plato, σωφροσύνη clearly means self-control, expressed here by the power to choose not to become drunk.[23]

Clement of Alexandria[24] uses σωφροσύνη in a metaphorical sense, contrasting the drunkenness of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* with the 'sobriety' of salvation, which for him, of course, meant conversion to Christianity.[25]

The word σωφροσύνη occurs 19 times in the works of Josephus. On most occasions it has the meaning 'temperance' or 'moderation'. Thus it means not responding to sexual advances or squandering all your money. It stands for the opposite of such misbehaviour as plundering the Temple or harbouring ambitions to become emperor.[26] It also means 'sobriety' considered as a complete way of life. Only at CA 2.195 does Josephus explicitly oppose σωφροσύνη to drunkenness.

Looking at the incidence of the word in the Septuagint, one book stands out: 4 Maccabees. The author opens by introducing the subject of the work: reason as the master of passion. Reason, in his view, makes abstinence possible. First he gives a definition of reason: it is the mind that makes a deliberate choice to live the life of wisdom. He then goes on to discuss wisdom. He describes what wisdom is, and ends by saying that forms of wisdom are prudence, justice, courage—and 'temperance': σωφροσύνη.[27] Here too, therefore, σωφροσύνη is considered to constitute a component of wisdom. Later in the chapter he says: "Temperance, as I understand it, is control over desires, and of desires some relate to the soul and others to the body".[28] As an example of a bodily desire he gives that for forbidden foods; and it is reason, he thinks, that enables

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virtues', which Plato was the first to put together in *Respublica* 427e. However, at that time *both* are considered good qualities for people to have, whereas in the *Laws* they are set against each other.

[23] North, *Sophrosyne*, 190–191.

[24] For details about Clement see below.

[25] North, *Sophrosyne*, 330.

[26] See also AJ 5.256: Josephus relates that the Hebrews, under the leadership of a certain Jair, were drifting towards disorder and that they displayed contempt for God; as a consequence they got ravaged by the Ammanites and the Philistines. The Hebrews then repented, having been "sobered up by their affliction" (σωφρονισθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν κακῶν), and turned back to God.

[27] 4 Macc 1:18; the four elements of wisdom that are mentioned here also form the so called 'cardinal virtues'.

[28] 4 Macc 1:30–31.

people to master such desires. He does not explicitly refer to abstinence from drinking, but it is obvious that σωφροσύνη is used here with much the same meaning as it is in *Contra Apionem*: abstinence from forbidden foods. In this passage it is seen as part of wisdom as well.

We ought to be aware that σωφροσύνη, as Josephus uses it at CA 2.195, had a number of connotations, to all of which his readers would have been alive. As is immediately apparent from the context it means 'not being drunk', but it also has the connotation of 'temperance' in a more general sense, and even of wisdom. Josephus says that people make offerings "for sobriety"; that is, they make offerings in the hope of being able to live a life of moderation. Here again Josephus' view is in agreement with Philo's.

3. *About the will of God*

Josephus proceeds to tell his readers not to make offerings in order to have an excuse to get drunk, "because this is not in accord with the will of God". Similarly, at 2.196 he says: "and he who prefers this [i.e. offering for common safety] to his own private affairs, is especially pleasing to God". Clearly for Josephus the will of God is of paramount importance; indeed it is the foundation of the law. Josephus says that people have to do things, or refrain from doing things (as the case may be), purely because that is the will of God. This is apparent several sections earlier, where Josephus is talking about Moses as lawgiver.

Moses saw God as his leader and counsellor. Therefore, whatever Moses did had to be the will of God. Once he became convinced of this he decided to put this to the people (CA 2.160). So, according to Josephus, when Moses wrote down the law, he attributed the leadership and the power to God (2.165). In this passage, Josephus also uses the term θεοκρατία, theocracy, for the first time, a word he probably invented by analogy with the words democracy and aristocracy. All our actions, occupations and speech, he says, should be directed towards honouring God, and Moses made sure that they were regulated accordingly (2.171).

The Jews believe that the law is instituted in accordance with the will of God (since Moses was led by God and would have been incapable, therefore, of doing anything that was *not* God's will). Thus it would be rank impiety not to live in accordance to that law (2.184).

Moses knew the will of God because God was his leader and counsellor. He decided to set down God's will in writing in order that the people might also know it. This was necessary because the will of the

people was not the same as the will of God, and the people could not be aware of this discrepancy without being told of it. Moses enabled people to avoid making mistakes born of ignorance (2.174).[29]

This is a subject for which Josephus drew directly on the Torah, although in his treatment he changed the order of presentation. In Exodus 24:3–4, we see the people all agreeing to act in accordance with God's will: "and all the people answered with one voice, and said, 'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do.' And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord". Josephus tells the story in *Contra Apionem* as though Moses first wrote down the words, and only then decided to show them to the people. But the important point remains the same: the law that Moses wrote down was the will of God.

As we have seen, Josephus can use the will of God as a reason for particular actions: one's whole life should express respect for God. Since the law *is* the will of God, it would be disrespectful not to act in accordance with it.

4. *About sacrifice and prayer*

"And during the sacrifices one must first pray for common safety, and only after that for oneself, because we are born for the community": this statement implies that it was common to pray during the sacrifice.[30] But the laws for sacrifice in the Torah, say nothing about praying during sacrifice; nor does Josephus himself say anything about praying in his descriptions of sacrifice in AJ 3.224–236 and 237–257.

There are however texts that do describe sacrifice accompanied by prayer. At AJ 8.108, Josephus himself describes King Solomon praying at the dedication of the Temple: "I have built this temple called after you, so that from it we may send up prayers into the air to you when sacrificing and seeking good omens". In this prayer King Solomon refers to sacrifice accompanied by prayer. When we compare this prayer with those in the two biblical texts Josephus paraphrases here, we see that neither 2 Chronicles 6:12–7:1 nor 1 Kings 8 mentions the combination of sacrifice with prayer.[31] In another passage, AJ 14.260, Josephus quotes

[29] As Christine Gerber says: "Gottes Wille ist den Menschen nicht von vornherein evident und unterscheidet sich von deren; deshalb bedarf es der Niederlegung dieses Willens für die Menschen im Gesetz", Gerber, *Bild*, 296.

[30] Josephus is most likely talking about statutory prayer here and not about private, individual prayer; see Chapter 5, p. 242.

[31] Before the biblical prayers, sheep and cattle are offered; then the ark is brought back in, and finally Solomon begins the prayers. Moreover, after the prayer in 2 Chronicles,

a decree to the people of Sardis concerning the Jews living there, to the effect that the Jews should have the right to come together, to lead a communal life, to adjudicate lawsuits among themselves, and "that a place be given them in which they may gather together with their wives and children and offer their ancestral prayers and sacrifices to God".[32] Finally, there is a passage describing an uprising in Jerusalem during the Passover, as a result of which many Jews lost their lives: "So there was mourning henceforth instead of feasting; and all, utterly oblivious of prayers and sacrifices, turned to lamentation and weeping".[33] People forgot that they had actually come there to pray and to sacrifice. These three passages all point to a sacrificial cult where sacrifice and prayers took place simultaneously.

Apart from Josephus' writings there are passages in other texts where simultaneity of sacrifice and prayer is also indicated. One instance occurs in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, which tells of the birth of John the Baptist. While the Baptist's father, Zechariah, was "serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense".[34] Following this we read that Zechariah's prayer has been answered. He and his wife Elizabeth are to have a son. The prayer is not said by the person who performs the incense offering, but it evidently formed part of the service for the people are said to be standing outside praying at the hour of incense.

By contrast there is nothing in the Old Testament about praying during the time of incense. Exodus 30:7–10 sets out the laws for the

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it is said that a fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the victims (2 Chr 7:1). A few verses later (2 Chr 7:5), Solomon holds another sacrifice, but both sacrifices still appear to be quite distinct from the prayer. Moreover, since the circumstances are exceptional (the dedication of the new Temple), I do not think that these texts undermine the assumption that sacrifice accompanied by prayer was not the custom in biblical times.

[32] This passage raises a problem which I shall not discuss in detail here, but which must be mentioned. The wording of this decree appears to indicate that there was a sacrificial cult in Sardis, whereas it has always been said that sacrifices could only be performed in Jerusalem since the one and only Temple is there. This may be true in theory, but the example of the temple in Leontopolis shows that there were places outside Jerusalem, and its Temple, where sacrificial rites were performed, in spite of the law. It is therefore not unlikely that sacrificial rites were also carried out elsewhere. See also Nickelsburg/Stone, *Faith*, 52.

[33] AJ 20.105–112.

[34] Luke 1:8–10.

burning of incense. The manner in which Aaron should conduct the offering is explained clearly, but nothing is said about praying, either within the sanctuary or outside it. The few instances in which sacrifice is accompanied by prayer in the Old Testament are all special occasions like festivals.[35]

Another passage in the New Testament which ought to be mentioned is Acts 3:1, which reads: "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour". From Josephus we know that the ninth hour (which was half way through the afternoon, approximately three o'clock) was the hour of the evening sacrifice. At AJ 14.65 Josephus says that even during the war the priests still performed the sacred ceremonies at the altar twice a day (as laid down in Exodus at 29:38–39): in the morning and at the ninth hour (these ceremonies are described in AJ 3.237). Given that Acts states that the ninth hour is the hour of prayer, and given what we know from tradition and Josephus (that is, that the ninth hour was the hour of sacrifice), we may conclude that there must have been a connection between the two in the first century CE.

Let us now look at the ceremony as it was conducted about 250 years earlier. We have at least two examples of prayer during the sacrifice in the second century BCE. The first is a text from the Old Testament, Daniel 9:21, which says: "while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice". Thus Daniel was praying at the time of the evening sacrifice, just like the people described in Luke 1:10. Evidently at the time Daniel was writing (probably about 165 BCE) the evening sacrifice was already considered an appropriate time for prayer.

About 20 to 40 years earlier than this, Jesus Sirach wrote in his *Wisdom*: "And all the people of the land gave a ringing shout of joy in prayer before the merciful one until he had finished ministering at the altar and had completed his statutory duties".[36] After this, the priest blessed the people. The Greek translation by Sirach's grandson is practically identical in content. Evidently at this time it was customary to say prayers at the end of the formal, liturgical action.[37] But the text also tells us that people were praying *until* the priest had finished the ministering

[35] Talmon, *World*, 202–203. See also Isa 1:11–15, which even condemns sacrifices during prayer.
[36] Sir 50:19.
[37] Hayward, *Jewish*, 59.

at the altar. So they were praying during the rite. This is probably the earliest text where praying during sacrifice is indicated.[38]

We can be reasonably sure that the practice of praying during the sacrifice was instituted later than the final redaction of the Torah, as it is not mentioned in it. According to E.P. Sanders, praying (and the recitation of scripture) must also have been introduced into temple service later than the Torah, since biblical law does not specify prayer in this connection.[39] Moreover, later on, in places where sacrifices could not be performed prayer came to be a substitute for sacrifice, as was already the case in Qumran.[40] All this indicates a connection between prayer and sacrifice later in history: they were performed together and were even understood to have the same purpose.

5. *About* ἡ κοινὴ σωτηρία

We saw that people were exhorted to pray for ἡ κοινὴ σωτηρία, common salvation or safety. This phrase occurs in various other places in pagan Greek literature; most of the time it refers to the 'common safety', that is, to the safety of the group or community, in the context of war. It is used in this sense, for instance, by Xenophon at *Anabasis* 3.2.3, and by Isocrates at *De pace* 39 and *Panegyricus* 85. In all three texts, σωτηρία means safety in the context of war, not redemption or salvation in any religious sense. Moreover, official Athenian inscriptions indicate that it was very common for magistrates to pray for the σωτηρία of the city.[41]

Josephus also uses the term with this sense at AJ 10.12. Sennacherib and the Assyrians are about to conquer Jerusalem, and Hezekiah entreats God to help all those without hope of rescue. Following this he sends some of his friends and a number of priests to the prophet Isaiah, asking him to sacrifice to God and ask for 'common safety', ἡ κοινὴ σωτηρία. Josephus' use of the phrase at this point is unambiguous: he

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[38] One point in common with the passage in Luke is that, in both texts, the *priest* is the one who carries out the sacrifice, while the *people* are praying outside. It is not clear what the normal practice was. That is, who prayed and at what time: was it during the sacrifice or immediately after it? This is an issue requiring further investigation but which falls outside the scope of the present study.

[39] Sanders, *Judaism*, 80, 255.

[40] Falk, *Daily*, 123–124; on the stages in the crystallisation of fixed prayer in Jerusalem see also Nitzan, *Qumran*, 44–45.

[41] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 138; for references see *ibid.*, 14–15.

means safety as understood in the context of war. Hezekiah is saying to God: "Please do not allow the people be killed by the Assyrians".

The expression occurs only once in the New Testament, in Jude 3. In the opening verses of his letter the author writes: "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share (the common salvation), I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints". Here Jude clearly does not mean 'common safety' in the sense in which the pagan authors used the expression. He uses this existing expression in a new, Christian context, in which κοινὴ σωτηρία has gained a specific religious meaning—hence the translation 'common salvation' rather than 'common safety'.

In the *Contra Apionem* passage we have been focusing on, Josephus talks about praying for common salvation/safety. He is discussing Jewish law in general, and there is no suggestion that he is talking about prayer during a time of war. We have seen a Christian author using the phrase in the sense of salvation but this certainly does not provide sufficient grounds for concluding that Josephus was also using it in this sense. So in what sense *does* he use it?

The two words are not used in conjunction in the Septuagint, but σωτηρία without κοινή sometimes has the meaning of salvation, as it does in Jude,[42] so Josephus is likely to have been familiar with this sense of the word. However, since it is never used in this sense elsewhere in his writings, there is still no compelling reason to translate ἡ κοινὴ σωτηρία in this passage as 'common salvation'. I think we have to suppose that the expression here means the same as it does in AJ 10.12 and as in its use by the Greek authors: Josephus is telling his readers that each should pray for the *safety* of all. Since there is no context of war at this point, a more neutral translation, 'well-being', is possible as well.

6. *About being born for the community*

Josephus explains why it is necessary to pray for common safety: it is "because we are born for the community"; and he who prefers this to his own private affairs, is especially pleasing to God.

Taken together with 'praying for common safety', this sentence expresses Josephus' view that people should devote themselves to

[42] See Gen 49:18, Isa 45:17, 46:13 and Ps. Sal. 16:5.

the community (next to God). In CA 2.146 Josephus puts κοινωνία (community) on a par with the cardinal virtues: "It will be apparent that we possess a code excellently designed to promote piety, friendly relations (community) with each other (κοινωνία μετ' ἀλλήων), and humanity towards the world at large, besides justice, hardihood and contempt of death".

So κοινωνία is the second of the three most important aspects of the law: after εὐσέβεια (piety towards God) and before φιλανθρωπία (love of other people, including non-Jews). This is the same classification we saw in our earlier discussion of the law: first God and his worship, then the Jewish community itself, and lastly people outside the Jewish community.

The expression 'to be born for the community' occurs nowhere else in the works of Josephus, so it is difficult to determine definitively the meaning with which he uses it, but he probably means to indicate that mutual harmony ought to exist between the Jews all over the world. Sanders illustrates this with the example of Antipater in AJ 14.127–132. Antipater and Hyrcanus II want to support the Roman army in their war in Egypt, and so they need the Egyptian Jews to help them: "Antipater, however, persuaded them too to side with his party on the ground of their common nationality".[43]

Another instance quoted by Sanders comes from Philo. At one point in *De legatione ad Gaium* the emperor Caligula is planning to set up a colossal statue of himself in the inner sanctuary of the Temple.[44] Of course to the Jews this was deeply offensive. When they heard the news "they gathered together in seclusion, and bewailed the disaster personal to each and common to all".[45] When the ensuing uprising threatened to become a worldwide revolt, Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria, became fearful. He thought of the Jewish race "spread over all the continents and islands (…) To draw all these myriads into war against him was surely very dangerous. Heaven forbid indeed that the Jews in every quarter should come by common agreement to the defence".[46] This story also shows that the Jews formed one great community, that Jews in every part of the empire were affected by events concerning Jewish communities in every other part.[47]

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[43] AJ 14.131.
[44] Philo, *De legatione ad Gaium* 184–215.
[45] Philo, *De legatione ad Gaium* 190.
[46] Philo, *De legatione ad Gaium* 214–215.
[47] Sanders, *Judaism*, 265.

This solidarity is what Josephus means when he says, "for we are born for the community". The community is more important than private, individual considerations, and everyone should put the community above these.

The idea of praying for the community can also be found in Philo. In *De vita Mosis* he tells how God wished to give Moses sovereign authority and to consecrate the priesthood "that it might forever offer up prayers for the whole universal race of mankind".[48] This is clearly not merely directed at Jews, but at the whole mankind. Moreover, in Greek religion as well there is evidence that certain officials were selected to perform religious tasks on behalf of the whole community. These tasks could be performed by priests, but also by politicians especially appointed for the job.[49]

This evidence confirms that the practices of praying for the community was not unique to Jews. Josephus' saying that people should put the community first in their prayers is in line with a widely shared outlook in antiquity.

7. *About not praying for good things*

Section 2.197 says: "We should not beseech God to give good things, because he has already given them of his own accord and put them at the disposal of all; rather should we pray for the capacity to accept them, and having received them, to keep them". Josephus is making several points in this passage. He says (1) that people ought not to ask for good things, because God has already given these of his own accord and (2) they are available to everyone; and (3) that in their prayers people should ask to be given the capacity to receive and keep the good things.

The first thing to discuss is the reason Josephus gives for saying one should not ask God for good things, namely that God has already given them of his own accord. There are parallels to this view in, for instance, Clement of Alexandria, who lived from ca. 150 to ca. 215 CE. Clement was probably born at Athens, but after his conversion to Christianity travelled a great deal. He lived for a long time in Alexandria, where

[48] Philo, *De vita Mosis* 1.149.

[49] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 167–168. On the selection of the officers see Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 54.6–7.

he taught his pupils Christian doctrine. He called himself not only a Christian, but beyond that a gnostic.[50] Part of the seventh book of his *Stromateis* is devoted to the gnostic's prayer (7.35–49).[51]

Clement has much to say about the gnostics' relationship with God and their attitude to life, but only his ideas about the content of their prayers need to be discussed here.[52] We shall see that, besides the view that God has already given the good things, there is a further similarity with Josephus.

According to Clement, the gnostic asks for what is good for his soul, and he asks that he may keep it. He requests what is truly good, and not merely (as people usually do) what seems to be good (38 and 44). Angels (who apparently also pray) only need to pray that they may keep the things they already have (39). God gives all good things without being asked: he does so of his own accord, whether he is asked or not (41 and 42). A gnostic asks not only to be given and allowed to keep good things, but also to be spared from wanting things he has not been given (44).

Comparing Clement with Josephus we find two major similarities. The first is that each says that God gives good things of his own accord. Josephus adds that people should therefore not ask for good things, since God has already given them, while Clement thinks they may do so even though God still gives his gifts even if you do not ask. And secondly, Clement says that people are allowed to ask that they may keep the good things they are given. I will discuss the second similarity later.

The subject of God giving people good things without them having to pray is also discussed by Maximus of Tyre. Maximus, who also lived in the second half of the second century, was a pagan philosopher travelling as an orator. The 41 treatises attributed to him give a good idea of the thoughts and preoccupations of the educated circles of his time. One of these tracts is about prayer, and is entitled *Should we pray?* (Εἰ δεῖ εὔχεσθαι).[53]

Maximus begins by telling his readers that there is little point in asking for things in their prayers, since if they deserve these things they

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[50] According to Clement, gnostics were people claiming esoteric knowledge. He certainly did not adhere to what we nowadays call Gnosticism.

[51] Roukema, *Clemens*, 7–8.

[52] To my knowledge no Jewish authors besides Josephus wrote on the subject of prayer. However, a number of his non-Jewish contemporaries did, and it may well prove worthwhile to compare them with Josephus in a future study.

[53] Van der Horst, 'Maximus', 11.

will get them anyway, while if they do not deserve these things they will not get them even if they ask for them. One should not ask for things that belong in the realm of providence, fate, fortune, or skill, because that would be pointless and ridiculous, and no god can tolerate being asked for things one should not ask him for.[54]

Maximus believes that a philosopher's prayer is a conversation with the gods about the things that one has, and that engaging in such conversational prayer is a proof of virtue. Socrates did not pray to gain money or power; rather, "he did pray to the gods, but it was from himself that he received, with their consent, spiritual virtue, living in tranquility, a blameless life, and a hopeful death". These things are the most miraculous gifts: the true gifts of the gods.[55]

As we see, Maximus too thinks that it is of no use to ask for things, because provided you deserve them you will get them anyway. What you should talk about with the gods in your prayers is how to gain things like inner peace, virtuousness and a hopeful death—things which in fact you already possess: these are gifts of the gods, but in fact you already have them within yourself—you need only ask for permission to 'use' them.

Despite the many exhortations against it, it nevertheless seems to have been common practice in this period to ask for good things in prayers.[56] Consider, for example, Philo. According to his definition in *De agricultura* 99, "prayer is asking for good things". And in *Quod deus sit immutabilis* 87 he says: "a prayer is a request for good things from God". God is thus seen as capable of providing good things. Philo clearly feels that praying for good things is a very natural thing to do. And he appears to be expressing a view of prayer commonly held in his time.

In pagan literature also there are several examples of passages which speak about praying for good things. There are two clear instances in Aristophanes. The first occurs at *Thesmophoriazusae* 310, where a female herald says in a bidding prayer: "Pray these things and good things for yourselves". The second occurs in *Ecclesiazusae*, where a citizen says: "We pray the Powers to give us all good things; still they hold forth their hands with hollowed palms".[57] Another example comes from Euripides.

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[54] Maximus, *Oratio* 5, 1–7.

[55] Maximus, *Oratio* 5, 8.

[56] See Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 8; he even mentions ἀγαθά in his list of common words in Greek prayers (p. 218).

[57] Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 781–782.

In *Helena* a messenger says to Menelaos: "Then why do we consult prophets? We ought to sacrifice to the gods and ask for good things, but leave divination alone".[58] And there is Demosthenes, who writes in *Contra Leptinem*: "we may both expect good things and pray for them, but we must reflect that all things are conditioned by mortality".[59]

And, as we shall see, Josephus also depicts people praying for good things.[60] It is difficult to find an explanation for this inconsistency; it will be discussed in the final chapter of this book. But the next thing to do now is to consider what these 'good things' that God has already given actually are.

Josephus has not defined τὰ ἀγαθά as he uses the term in this section in *Contra Apionem*, and it is not immediately clear what he means by it. What are the good things?

Maximus' text gives us a possible answer, for he has already specified the things one should not ask for on account of their already being in one's possession: spiritual virtue, living in tranquillity, a blameless life, and a hopeful death. But he also tells his readers not to pray for things that belong in the realm of providence, fate, fortune or skill—and these are a quite a different sort of thing from the other, more abstract, good things mentioned above.

Looking at the other passages in *Contra Apionem* where Josephus refers to the 'good things', there are three passages of relevance to our understanding of this issue. Several sections earlier, in 2.166, Josephus discussed Moses and the fact that, in effect, by vesting all sovereignty and authority in God, he established the Jewish state as a theocracy: "To Him (God) he (Moses) persuaded all to look, as the author of all good things (τῶν ἀγαθῶν), both those which are common to all mankind, and those which they had won for themselves by prayer (lit. 'asking') in the crises of their history". Then, at 2.249, there is a reference to the Greek gods: "some of the gods as givers of good things (…) and others (gods) to be averted".

In both passages, Josephus refers to the good things people are given by God, or gods, just as, in section 2.197, he tells people not to ask for good things. But the question remains, what do these 'good things'

[58] Euripides, *Helena* 753–754.
[59] Demosthenes, *Contra Leptinem* 20.161.
[60] See Chapter 5, pp. 248–252.

amount to? Could the answer perhaps be the law, which God is supposed to have given to his people?

Perhaps the third passage, 2.277, can make things clearer. Josephus criticises other nations, which violate their own laws, but goes on to say, "Not so with us. Robbed though we be of wealth, of cities, of all *other* good things (τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν), our Law at least remains immortal" [emphasis added]. So the law is not included among the good things, but wealth and cities are, and the 'good things' would thus appear to be things such as wealth, fortune, or skill, for instance. Or are they rather, in the words of Maximus, inner peace and a hopeful death?[61]

An author who can shed further light on this issue is Juvenal. In his tenth Satire Juvenal also recommends leaving it to the gods to decide what they will give you, because they will give what is best for you (while you will ask for what is pleasing). What you could ask for, and could find within yourself, is a sound mind in a sound body and a stout heart that can bear anything.

There is a similarity here with Maximus. People should pray for things that they already have within themselves; but it is clear that this cannot be what Josephus means. He says that God has already laid the good things before everyone publicly. The Greek expression is εἰς μέσον, which literally means 'in the middle' and can be translated as 'for all' or 'publicly'. Thus Josephus cannot plausibly be taken to be referring to any inner qualities or attributes.

I therefore suggest that for Josephus the 'good things' are in fact things like happiness and a healthy life: things that anyone can have, but that not everyone can keep.[62] And that is what people should ask for: to keep these things, and not to lose them.

The third subject to be discussed is 'asking for the capacity to keep the good things'. Earlier Clement was quoted as saying that the gnostic prays that he may keep the good things, and this applies not only to people: angels should also ask to keep the good things they already have. Let us look at one more pagan author, Horace. One of the odes in the first book of his *Carmina* is about a poet's prayer to Apollo. He first tells us what a poet should not ask for (things like beautiful landscapes, gold and rich harvests), but he ends as follows: "Grant me, O Latona's son,

[61] See also Heiler, *Gebet*, 204–205.
[62] In Chapter 5 this will be field-tested.

to be content with what I have, and, sound of body and mind, to pass an old age lacking neither honour nor the lyre!"[63] As we see, Horace too recommends praying to keep the good things that people already have: healthy minds and bodies, and music.

From all this it is clear that everything Josephus says about prayer may be found in the work of other authors, albeit they are nearly all pagan.[64] His views on what may or may not be asked for in prayer are thus not at all exceptional: they represent a widely shared outlook of his time.

B. *What should we pray for?*

We should now consider what Josephus actually tells people to pray for. In section 2.196, Josephus tells the people to pray for common safety, and in 2.197 he tells them not to ask for good things in their prayers, but rather to ask that they may keep them. On the one hand, they should ask for common safety and on the other, to keep the good things they already have: the question that arises is, are these two statements connected? There are two possibilities: the first is that people should ask both for common safety *and* the keeping of good things, the second is that ἡ κοινὴ σωτηρία actually encompasses 'the keeping of good things'. The good things could then be taken to mean things that have to be kept safe, like cities, houses, family, and perhaps also well-being.

If we assume that τὰ ἀγαθά means something like 'a good and healthy life', or 'well-being', then it has the connotation of 'living in freedom from danger'. When you ask for σωτηρία, you ask for this: that you will be kept safe from all dangers. So Josephus is saying the same thing in both passages: people should ask for everyone to be safe and healthy, and for them to stay that way.

C. *Conclusion*

Now that I have discussed all topics in CA 2.195–197 that bear on my main theme, I want to sum up as follows. First of all, we have seen that with the exception of the idea that the law is the will of God, very little of Josephus' writing on the subject of prayer derives directly

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[63] Horace, *Carmina* 1.31, 16–20.

[64] They are all pagan, that is, except Clement. But he had been very much influenced by pagan authors and in this context may thus be considered as belonging to the same school of thought.

from the Torah. The idea of all Jews forming one great community is not explicit in the Bible, but it seems clear that it is the Torah in particular that binds the Jews together (while the Jews are obviously not the only people to have had this sort of community feeling). All of Josephus' other views exhibit the influence of other thinkers and the general culture of his time. Warnings against drunkenness, for instance, appear to have been quite common in the Hellenistic period among both Jews and Gentiles. Philo and Jesus Sirach expressed such warnings, but they are also to be found in the New Testament. The practice of praying during the sacrifice was still unknown at the time of the final redaction of Torah, but by the beginning of the second century BCE it appears to have become a regular part of the rite. In places where it was not possible to sacrifice, prayer even became a substitute for sacrifice. Josephus' comments about prayers and their content are in line with widely held pagan views. Maximus of Tyre and Horace, for example, wrote in almost identical terms.

We may therefore conclude that in his attitude to prayer Josephus was a child of his time. Apart from the traditional Jewish beliefs he expresses, such as the law being the will of God as written down by Moses and the Jews all forming one great community, his religious views are in agreement with contemporary Hellenistic thought.

II. Daily Prayer: AJ 4.212

> Twice each day, at its beginning and when the time comes to turn to sleep, people must bear witness to God for the gifts he gave when he delivered them from the land of the Egyptians. For thanksgiving is proper by nature and it is given in return for what happened and as a spur for what will be.

This text is part of the long passage in AJ 4 where Josephus summarises the law that Moses delivered to the Hebrew people after his parting speech.[65] Josephus' presentation of Moses' constitution is organised thematically.[66] The passage about prayer comes after the injunctions relating to the founding of a holy city and a single place of worship (199–201), the institution of the three annual pilgrim festivals (203–204), regulations concerning sacrificing 'payments' to God (205, 206), the

[65] AJ 4.176–194; Deut 31:1–9.
[66] AJ 4.199–301.

prohibition against the destruction of other people's holy artefacts (207), and the septennial reading of the Law (209–211). All of these latter themes can be found in Deuteronomy; however, despite Josephus' claim in AJ 4.196 that he will convey the law without any additions, the section concerning daily prayers is not to be found in Deuteronomy nor in any other book of the Torah.[67]

There are two references to daily worship in the Torah: Exodus 29 and Numbers 28. Both passages say that the Israelites must sacrifice two lambs each day, one in the morning and one at twilight.[68] However, since sacrifice refers to Temple practice, it is unlikely that there is any connection between these passages and Josephus' passage about daily prayer.

A text that may be related to Josephus' passage is Deuteronomy 6. It does not mention prayer but it does tell people to speak of the laws every day, first when going to bed and again when getting up in the morning, the same times that Josephus gives for people to pray. This text, as well as Deuteronomy 11, also orders the people to wear the laws as a symbol on their arms, to bind them on their heads (in tradition captured by the *tefillin*, which must be worn during prayer) and to write them on their doorposts (the *mezuzah*).[69] Josephus mentions these prescriptions in section 213 immediately following the passage on prayer. However, he starts 213 with the duty to inscribe the doors, thus separating the section concerning prayer from the prescription about wearing the *tefillin*. It is strange that Josephus does not mention prayer in the latter section since the custom is already linked to prayer in his time. However this is perfectly consistent with Deuteronomy 6, where there is no mention of prayer either.

Many scholars have suggested that Josephus' passage refers to the daily recitation of the *Shema'*.[70] Although this is not impossible the evidence in support of this speculation is weak. The Jewish Bible does not speak of daily prayers but we know that in New Testament and Rabbinical times it had become the custom to recite the *Shema'* twice

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[67] Other references to daily prayer in Jewish literature: Philo, *De vita contemplativa* 27; SibOr 3.591–594; Wis 16:28; 4Q503.

[68] Ex 29:38–42; Num 28:1–8.

[69] Deut 6:7–9 and Deut 11:18–21.

[70] See for instance Feldman, *Flavius*, 406 n. 639; Falk, *Daily*, 47; Verseput, 'James 1:17', 183; Holtzmann, 'täglichen', 94. The *Shema'* consists of three texts from the Torah, of which Deut 6:4–9 is the first, followed by Deut 11:13–21 and Num 15:37–41.

a day.[71] However, reciting the *Shema'* is a profession of faith rather than a prayer. As AJ 4.212 shows, Josephus considered it customary to pray twice a day. However, although we know that in the Rabbinical period reciting the *Shema'* was part of the prayer ritual, it seems very unlikely that the prayers Josephus refers to in this passage consist of reciting the *Shema'*.[72] *The Shema'* does not correspond to the accepted understanding of what prayer is.[73] Although there is a correspondence in the reference to God's help in the exodus from Egypt,[74] there is no element of thanksgiving in the *Shema'*, which for Josephus is the most important aspect of daily prayer.

A. *The passage*

1. *The times at which prayers should be said*

Josephus tells people they should pray twice each day. Many sources, however, suggest that the custom was to pray three times a day. Daniel 6:11 says that Daniel used to pray three times a day, while b.*Berakot* 26b says that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob each instituted one prayer time: morning, afternoon and evening respectively.[75]

In his rendering of Daniel, Josephus omits the statement about Daniel's habit of praying three times daily.[76] Indeed, nowhere does Josephus mention the concept of praying three times per day; nor does he ever mention the ninth hour as an hour of daily prayer. There are only three passages that refer to the ninth hour as an hour at which religious duties are to be performed: BJ 6.423 speaks of Passover, at which the priests sacrifice from the ninth to the eleventh hour; in AJ 14.64 Josephus says that during Ptolemy's siege of Jerusalem on the

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[71] Gerhardsson, *Shema*, 26; see also Mk 12:29–30 and m.*Berakot* 1:1–4. There is no evidence that the practice was customary in Qumran; some scholars argue that 1QS 10:10 is a reference to the *Shema'*; however, the textual evidence is not sufficient to warrant this conclusion (see Sarason, 'Communal', 158–159).

[72] See also Jeremias, *Abba*, 71 on the probable difference between the *Shema'* and the daily prayers.

[73] See p. 22.

[74] Num 15:41.

[75] The New Testament also indicates that at the time it was customary to make an afternoon prayer, for example Acts 3:1 says that Peter and John went to the Temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour (half way through the afternoon, approximately three o'clock). See also Didache 8:3. On the different possibilities for the times at which prayer three times a day might have been made (such as morning, afternoon and evening or third, sixth and ninth hours) see Holtzmann, 'täglichen'.

[76] See AJ 10.255.

Sabbath the priests still found it possible to sacrifice twice (δίς) a day, in the morning and at the ninth hour; and AJ 16.163 quotes a decree by Augustus regarding the Jews in Asia, saying that they do not have to appear in court on the Sabbath or after the ninth hour on the preceding day. None of these instances suggests that is was the practice to pray at the ninth hour on a daily basis. In his description of the translation of the Septuagint, Josephus follows the writer of the Letter of Aristeas in saying that the translators worked every day until the ninth hour, at which time they could recess "to attend to their bodily wants".[77] There is no indication in Josephus' work that the ninth hour was a time of daily prayer.

In Greek religion there was no fixed prayer schedule: prayers could be made at any time of day or night.[78] However, there is talk of prayers at dawn or dusk (all in combination with sacrifice). Hesiod says one should propitiate the gods "with libations and incense, both when you go to bed and when the holy light has come back"; and Plato speaks of "addressing the gods in prayers and supplications (…) and at the rising and setting of the sun and moon".[79] Xenophon speaks of the Spartan king who wants to pray when it is still dark, so that he can capture the goodwill of the god early.[80] There is no time at which people were obliged to pray, but as this passage indicates it was thought prayer at dawn (or dusk) could have special impact.

2. *Giving thanks to God*

People should pray to acknowledge God's gifts, in particular the liberation from Egypt. In a sense this is in accordance with what Josephus writes at CA 2.197, where he says that people should not ask God for good things for the reason that he has already given these things of his own accord.[81] But in the present passage Josephus stresses that prayer must concern εὐχαριστία, which is supposed to be a natural thing for human beings to do. εὐχαριστία can be translated in two ways: as 'thankfulness' or 'gratitude', an emotion; but also as 'giving thanks', an action. Given the continuation of the sentence, the latter is the most appropriate translation, but for Josephus the word had both meanings.

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[77] AJ 12.104.
[78] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 157–159.
[79] Hesiod, *Opera et dies* 338–339; Plato, *Leges* 887e.
[80] Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum* 13.3.
[81] See pp. 39–42.

There are two components to giving thanks as Josephus says in AJ 4.212: thanksgiving as a repayment for done deeds, and expressing gratitude in order to incite the recipient of the thanksgiving to bestow further benefits in the future. This seems similar to m.*Berakot* 9:4, which says that when a man comes into a town he should pray when he comes in and when he goes away again; he would then be "offering thanks for what is past and making supplication for what is still to come". But whereas the Mishnah text separates the past and future and links thanksgiving only to the past, Josephus states that thanksgiving is directed at both past and future: it has the additional function of seeking to induce God to grant further gifts in the future.

Apparently for Josephus it was enough to thank God with a prayer, that is, with words. This can be seen in Solomon's second prayer at the Temple, where Josephus has Solomon say that people should thank God not by deeds, but with their voices.[82] According to Versnel, in Antiquity, prayers of gratitude (χάρις) and use of the word εὐχαριστεῖν (which Josephus uses here) were rare. The Greeks expressed gratitude by praising or honouring the gods: it was customary to thank the gods with gifts, a sacrifice or an inscription. Hymns or songs were also used to thank gods: this was practised by musicians and was comparable to a sacrifice of food by a farmer—an offering to the gods of the fruits of one's work.[83]

Josephus has 22 instances in which the use of the word εὐχαριστ- (either as a verb, a noun or an adjective) refers to people thanking God: once in *De bello Judaico*, once in AJ 15 and the rest in the biblical part of *Antiquitates*. This is consistent with Versnel's observation that the word was used only rarely in pagan Greek texts: Josephus has people thank God mainly in his biblical material.

Nine instances of εὐχαριστεῖν occur in prayers.[84] In some instances the word occurs only in brief statements, such as "he thanked God",[85] but often the prayer mentions the specific gift or favour being thanked for as well. Prayers give thanks for such things as victory in war, for sending food, or for punishing someone. In all cases they give thanks for some specific benefit received. None of the prayers is equivalent to

[82] AJ 8.111.
[83] Versnel, 'Religious', 42–62.
[84] AJ 2.253; 7.95, 314; 9.2, 11; 10.202; 11.64, 66; 15.421.
[85] As for example AJ 2.253; 7.314.

the daily thanksgiving prayer instituted by Moses in the form Josephus suggests here. All the prayers that express gratitude do so for some recent deed or circumstance, not for God's help in the distant past when he brought the people out of Egypt.

Apart from the prayers there are several non-prayer texts using the word εὐχαριστεῖν that shed further light on Josephus' conception of thanksgiving to God. When Josephus relates Abraham's profession of monotheism, he writes that Abraham saw that the land and sea, and the sun and moon did not have their own authority, but rendered services "through the might of their commanding sovereign [i.e. God], to whom alone it is right to render our homage and thanksgiving".[86] Josephus describes several festivals at which it is customary to thank God: it is part of the three annual pilgrim festivals and of Purim.[87] Moreover, another prescription of the law Josephus relates is that when people have offered God a tithe for widows and orphans, they must thank God "for having delivered his race from the insolence of the Egyptians and given them a good land (…)".[88] Especially in the latter case, the resemblance with the text on daily prayer is obvious, but from all these texts we may conclude that according to Josephus it was customary to thank God in a general way on account of his being sovereign (Abraham) and because he delivered the people from Egypt (and Haman, in the case of Purim). The most reasonable explanation for the fact that such prayers are not recorded in Josephus' work is that the custom was too matter-of-course for him to see any need to write them down.

III. Minor References to Prayer Practice

Apart from the two passages we have discussed thus far, there are several minor references to prayer practice. Many of these references consist of subsidiary remarks which serve to illustrate a main point. A typical example occurs in AJ 6.2, where Josephus relates the story of the capture of the Ark by the Philistines. The Philistines position the Ark next to a statue of their god Dagon, but when they go to worship him the next morning they find the statue fallen from its pedestal and

[86] AJ 1.156.
[87] Annual festivals: AJ 4.203; Purim: AJ 11.294.
[88] AJ 4.242.

lying on the ground. Josephus says they found Dagon worshipping the Ark, while the parallel biblical text establishes only the fact that the statue was lying on the ground.[89] The important point here is that Josephus' text indicates that the worship was performed lying on the ground. This passage illustrates how incidental remarks by Josephus can provide us with significant information.

A. *Prayer as a professional duty*

The references can be divided into several categories. To start with, there are three references characterising prayer as a formal, professional duty. When Moses appoints Aaron as High priest, he enumerates his tasks, one of which is "offering prayers on our behalf".[90] God will listen to these prayers (and accept the sacrifices) because they come from a man of his own choosing. This remark shows that it was the task of the High priest to deliver prayers on behalf of the community, and this appears to have been thought preferable to people praying themselves, for the reason that the High priest was chosen by God and therefore God would not ignore him.

Not only Aaron was to pray for the people: the task was extended to all Levites, as can be seen from AJ 4.222, a section of the law discussing unsolved murders. In this passage Josephus describes the procedure to be followed when a murderer cannot be found. The city council is to find a heifer in the town nearest to the scene of the crime. The officials must then perform a ritual together with the priests and Levites to purify the city of the murder, and they must implore God to be gracious. It is thus the task of the priests and Levites to assist the town elders with this ritual and prayer.

A third instance that shows prayer as a professional duty is AJ 12.97, which mentions special officers who usually performed the prayers. Preceding a festive dinner for the Jewish elders about to translate the Hebrew Bible, the king asks the priest Elissaeus to perform the prayer instead of these officers.[91] The existence of these officers is not known to us only through Josephus: the Letter of Aristeas has the same story.[92]

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[89] 1 Sam 5:3–4.
[90] AJ 3.191.
[91] AJ 12.94–100 (Elissaeus' prayer, AJ 12.98).
[92] Let. Aris. 184.

B. *How to pray*

The next category consists of references relating to how prayer is to be performed. With regard to prayer posture there are several references if we include the remarks introducing some of the prayers. The first prayer posture to mention is prostration: lying on (or throwing oneself to) the ground. The example given above, of the statue of Dagon, is not explicitly about prayer but it *is* about worship. Another reference occurs in AJ 10. Amazed at Daniel's ability to explain his dream, Nebuchadnezzar "falls on his face" and hails Daniel, in the manner, Josephus says, "in which men worship God".[93] Beside these two allusions to prostration as the posture of worship, there are several prayers in Josephus' work that are introduced by the remark that the praying person fell on the ground or on his or her face.[94] Falling on one's face to worship or pray to God is a common biblical prayer posture.[95] Stretching one's hands to heaven is another posture Josephus mentions in the introduction to some of his prayers.[96] There are no other references to this gesture in Josephus' work, but the few existing references warrant the conclusion that it was a familiar practice.[97] Like prostration, raising the hands is a biblical gesture.[98]

A remark not about prayer posture but about where prayer instructions come from occurs in AJ 18, where Josephus describes the three Jewish sects. Concerning the Pharisees he says that they are extremely influential among the people, and that "all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition".[99] Josephus presents the Pharisees as the leading school in Jewish public life; this sentence is one of the witnesses to this.[100] Prescriptions concerning prayer apparently belong to the public realm.

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[93] AJ 10.211.

[94] See for example the prayer by Moses and Aaron (AJ 3.310), David's thanksgiving hymn (AJ 7.95), the prayer by the Israelites at Mount Carmel (AJ 8.343), and Esther's prayer (AJ 11.231).

[95] See for example Gen 24:26; Ps 95:6; Jdt 9:1; Sir 50:17.

[96] See Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent (AJ 4.40), Ezra about mixed marriages (AJ 11.143), Nehemiah pleading for his countrymen (AJ 11.162) and Elisha's prayer when he transforms the water from a spring (BJ 4.462).

[97] On this gesture see also the discussion of Moses outside Datham's tent, p. 112.

[98] See for example Exod 9:29,33; Job 11:13; Ps 28:2; Isa 1:15.

[99] AJ 18.15.

[100] Mason, *Josephus*, 204–205. Scholars disagree about the accuracy of Josephus' portrait of the Pharisees as the leading figures in Jewish society. See Mason, *Josephus*, 205 n. 12 and Mason, *Flavius*, 32–39; 372–373.

C. *Prayer in the Law*

There are a few references in Josephus' rendering of the Law in AJ 3 and 4 that need to be discussed. Besides the passage about daily prayer we discussed in the previous section, there are some further references to thanking God. At the three annual pilgrim festivals, the Hebrews should convene from all over the country and render thanks to God.[101] It is not said explicitly that people should give thanks by praying. The parallel text in Deuteronomy says that people must bring gifts.[102] Two further statements relate to the offering of a tithe for the widows and orphans (which should be done once every three years), when people should again give thanks to God.[103] The first of these two statements says that they must bless God (εὐλογήσαντες). In the parallel passage Deuteronomy quotes a declaration people should make to God.[104] The second statement again speaks of giving thanks. For this statement there is no parallel in Deuteronomy. These three passages, plus the one from the previous section, are the only references in the *Antiquitates* excerpt of the law that could be about prayer. However, only the passage on daily prayer is unquestionably about prayer. In *Contra Apionem*, where Josephus also summarises the law, the only reference to prayer is the passage we discussed in the first section of this chapter.

There are two references indicating that prayer was an established custom. One is when Josephus says that he and a few of his friends were questioned in the prayer house while they were performing "the regular service (τὰ νόμιμα) and engaged in prayer". Evidently the act of prayer was a part of the customary service. This is also to be seen in AJ 14.260, where Josephus quotes a decree of the people of Sardis, which says that they will be given a place "in which they may gather (…) and offer their ancestral prayers and sacrifices". These are the only such references to prayer in Josephus' work.

D. *Other references*

Before turning to the Essenes and their prayer practices, there are two further remarks standing on their own that must be mentioned. Indeed, these remarks come closest to the prayers we discuss in the next chapter,

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[101] AJ 4.203.
[102] Deut 16:16.
[103] AJ 4.241, 243.
[104] Deut 26:12–15.

namely the personal prayers made on an incidental basis which form part of the narrative. Firstly, Josephus remarks in BJ 2 that it is customary for ill people to make a vow that they will abstain from wine and shave their heads for 30 days.[105] Since a vow is a promise made to God it falls under the definition of prayer we gave at the beginning. Moreover, the Greek word Josephus uses for 'vow' is εὐχὴ, which can also mean 'prayer', further support for considering a vow as a kind of prayer in this context.[106] Josephus tells his readers in this editorial remark that sick people prayed to God and promised to conduct themselves in certain ways in exchange for healing.

Another isolated passage is in AJ 17. Antipater has been accused of attempting to murder his father Herod. At the trial, after the indictment, Antipater turns to God (and all men) to testify and prove that he is innocent.[107] Josephus adds an editorial comment on his prayer, saying that people who are "lacking in virtue" commit crimes, rule out divine intervention and act in accordance with their own purpose, but when they are caught and made to stand trial, all of a sudden they ask God to help them.[108] Apparently, for Josephus prayer can also be an instrument cowards to turn when they are driven into a corner.

E. *The Essenes*

The final passage we will look at in this chapter is one that has raised much discussion. In *De bello Judaico*, in which he describes the three Jewish sects,[109] Josephus devotes a long section to the Essenes. There are two references to the prayer practices of the Essenes. In BJ 2.128–133 Josephus describes the daily routine of the Essene sect and says that their worship of the deity "takes a peculiar form" (ἰδίως): they start the day by praying to the sun "as though they entreat him to rise".[110] Many scholars have found this passage problematic. Josephus (an eyewitness)[111] states regarding his favourite philosophical school that they worship the sun, despite the fact that as a Jewish sect they ought to worship God, and God alone. Some scholars have tried to circumvent this difficulty

[105] BJ 2.313.
[106] See also the discussion of Jacob's vow at Bethel, p. 78.
[107] Antipater, AJ 17.128.
[108] AJ 17.129.
[109] See Rajak, *Jewish*, 219–240.
[110] BJ 2.128.
[111] V 11.

by translating the passage differently, to say that the Essenes pray 'in the direction' of the sun (εἰς αὐτόν), that is towards the East, 'as if' (ὥσπερ) they beseech it to rise.[112] However, two observations make this proposal untenable. Firstly, there is another remark by Josephus himself that again identifies the sun as the deity worshipped by the Essenes: a few sections later he describes the lavatory customs of the sect and says that when they go to use the lavatory they wrap themselves up with their mantle so that they may not offend "the rays (αὐγάς) of the deity".[113] The word 'rays' here clearly makes it impossible to doubt that the deity in question is the sun.[114] Secondly, several other witnesses indicate that there was a certain amount of sun worship in early Judaism.[115] Against this background we cannot conclude otherwise than that Josephus is telling us that the Essenes prayed to the sun each morning.

Another custom among the Essenes was that a priest said grace before and after breakfast. No one could start breakfast until after the prayer. Josephus says they did so to honour God as "the bountiful giver of life".[116] In Qumran there is also evidence that a priest (or similar figure) blessed the food before meals.[117]

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered all the references to prayer in Josephus' work. As we have seen there are two passages in which prayer receives substantial treatment. Firstly there is the passage in *Contra Apionem* dealing with liturgical prayer and the regulations regarding how to comport oneself and for what to pray. Secondly, there is the reference to daily prayers in AJ 4.212, instructing people to give thanks to God twice daily. In the final section we looked at all the brief references that touch on some aspect of prayer: prayer as a priestly task, prayer posture, and the occasions on which people generally pray. All of this offers a view of prayer practice in Josephus' time and of how he saw it. Prayer was a regular custom, both in the Temple and for people in daily life. It was important that people were careful as to how they

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[112] On such discussions see Smith, *Cult*, 244–247 and Beall, *Josephus*, 52.
[113] BJ 2.148.
[114] See also Fauth, 'Salutatio', 51–54.
[115] See Smith, *Cult*, 105, 238–262 and Goodenough, *Jewish*, 121.
[116] BJ 2.131.
[117] 1QS 6:4–5; 1Qsa 2:17–21; 1QS 10:14–15.

prayed and what they prayed for. Not for new favours, but rather to be happy with what God has given and for the capacity to keep these things are what, according to Josephus, people ought to pray for. People should give thanks to God twice daily. In the Temple it was the task of the priests to pray on behalf of the people, on regular days and on special occasions. It was to be expected that God would listen because the priests (or Levites) were chosen by God to perform the prayers. Prayers and sacrifices were performed according to the rules of the Pharisees. There were different postures: prostrate on the ground or with arms upstretched. Sometimes prayer was used for practical matters: by sick people asking God to heal them, or by defendants at trials, guilty or not, asking God to prove their innocence.

In the next chapter we examine the content of people's prayers: not daily and liturgical prayers, which have been under discussion in the present chapter, but prayers embedded in a narrative, performed by individual men and women.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRAYERS

I. Noah after the Flood: AJ 1.96–98

> (96) Noah, fearing that God would flood the earth every year, because he had sentenced mankind to destruction, offered burnt offerings and asked God to maintain the original order in the future and inflict such calamity no more, by which the whole race of living beings would run the risk of being destroyed; but [he asked God], having avenged the wicked, to spare those who survived because of their goodness and those who had been judged fit to escape the danger. (97) For [he said] they would be more unfortunate than those and condemned to worse evil, if they might not be absolutely safe from it but might be kept for another flood, when they, having learned[1] of the terrible experience of the first destruction, would also suffer a second. (98) He beseeched him to accept his offer graciously and to harbour such wrath against the earth no more, in order that they, concentrating on farming it [i.e. the earth] and building cities, might have a happy life, and that they should lack none of the good things they enjoyed before the deluge; so that they would live unto a good old age and a length of life similar to that enjoyed by men previously.

This is Noah's prayer after God has flooded the earth and the earth has dried up again. Although the story of the deluge is roughly similar in Genesis[2] and *Antiquitates*, Josephus' account of the event is much briefer: the reference is only a few sentences in length and concerns people's ages and Moses' alteration of the calendar. The reason for the Flood

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[1] The Greek sentence here is: τοῦ μὲν πρώτου τὸν φόβον καὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν μαθόντες, τοῦ δευτέρου δὲ τὴν ἀπώλειαν. Thackeray mentions the *varia lectio* παθόντες, which occurs in two manuscripts; he says this should probably be inserted after ἀπώλειαν, whereas these manuscripts have παθόντες *instead of* μαθόντες. He is apparently suggesting a reading including μαθόντες *and* παθόντες; he does not show this in his Greek text, but he does in his translation of the sentence. I think this has to be the way to resolve the problem, firstly because, without an extra verb the sentence would have no meaning; and secondly, if there were only one verb, it would not be clear which one: neither ἱστορίαν παθόντες nor ἀπώλειαν μαθόντες would have any meaning. However, when the verbs are written as Thackeray suggests, the combinations are possible and the meaning of the sentence becomes clear. If this is indeed the correct reading, then Josephus was probably playing with words, an allusion to the expression πάθει μάθος, wisdom comes through suffering, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon 177*.

[2] Gen 6–8.

in both texts is the bad behaviour and thoughts of the people. The 'sons' or 'angels' of God had mingled with women and had children, who behaved in an evil manner. (Josephus compares their behaviour with that of the Giants in Greek literature,[3] and Genesis, too, mentions giants.) All the people behaved very badly and God wanted to destroy them for it. Except Noah, who was a righteous man and was therefore saved by God: he made Noah build a ship on which he would survive the Flood.

A major difference between Genesis and *Antiquitates* is that in *Antiquitates* Noah is much more of an independent person than he is in Genesis, where he is merely someone following God's orders. In *Antiquitates* he acts of his own accord and he has become a conscious personality. His prayer is in line with this characterisation. He tries to change the behaviour of the proud sons of the 'angels of God' because he does not approve of it, and when they do not respond to him he leaves the country.

The prayer Noah says after the Flood is in line with this conscious, independent personality. In Genesis, Noah makes a burnt offering, the smell of which already pleases God;[4] the offering evokes a response from God, which takes the form of a covenant between God and Noah and, consequently, between God and man. However, in *Antiquitates*, besides offering the sacrifice, Noah says a long prayer. As in Genesis, God makes his covenant speech in response but, in *Antiquitates*, it is Noah, with his prayer and the request contained in that prayer, who is responsible for bringing about the covenant, rather than God, who is the initiator in Genesis.[5]

In and around God's speech in *Antiquitates*, which parallels the content of the covenant as given in the Bible, it is stressed several times that, because of Noah, God promised not to punish the people any

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[3] AJ 1.73. Another work suggesting a possible link between the Giants and the Flood is the third book of the Sibylline Oracles, a Jewish text which was probably written between 80 and 40 BCE (Buitenwerf, *Book III*, 124–134). Verses 108–158 describe the strife among the Titans. These are the sons of Gaea and Uranus, who were also believed to be the parents or ancestors of the Giants. Originally Titans and Giants were different creatures; later in history, however, they came to be considered one and the same. The strife in the Sibylline Oracles is ended by God who visits an "evil" upon them, thus killing them all. Considering the sequence of events in the book and Noah's role in it (as the forefather of the Sibyl) it is possible that by this 'evil' the author meant the Flood. (SibOr 3.156) See Buitenwerf, *Book III*, 177.

[4] Gen 8:20.

[5] See also Feldman, *Flavius*, 35–36, n. 246.

more and to hear his prayer. Josephus underlines this when he writes that God made these promises to Noah "because he loved the man for his righteousness".[6] And he puts the following words into God's mouth: "From henceforth I will cease to exact punishment for crimes (…) because you ask me to".[7]

A. *The prayer*

1. *Survivors of the Flood*

Noah prays for a specific group of people, namely, "those who have survived because of their honesty and those who were judged fit to escape the danger". This is quite interesting since, unless he means only himself and his family, it implies that there were survivors of the deluge. This is confirmed a few sections later in 1.109, where Josephus writes about the three sons of Noah, who were the first to descend from the mountains to the plains: "the rest, who by reason of the Flood were sore afraid of the plains hesitated to descend", were persuaded by Noah's sons. In a footnote to his translation, Thackeray remarks that presumably the grandsons and later descendants are meant here. However, in the light of Noah's remark in the prayer, I think Josephus takes it that there were more survivors of the Flood, namely, honest people besides Noah, who were also judged fit to survive.

When we compare this account with those of other, non-biblical, authors who wrote about the Flood, we see that neither Pseudo-Philo nor Jubilees mentions survivors of the Flood other than Noah and his sons. However, from his references to the Giants in Greek literature and to 'barbarians' who had descriptions of the Flood,[8] Josephus obviously knew other accounts of the Flood story. It is therefore possible that there are accounts of further survivors in one or more of these.

Support for this view is to be found in Berossus' *Babyloniaca*,[9] which refers to survivors other than the 'hero', Xisouthros, and his family: once the Flood was over he came out of his ship with his wife, his daughter and the pilot. They made obeisance and offered to the gods and then disappeared. Then other people emerged from the ship

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[6] AJ 1.99.
[7] AJ 1.101.
[8] AJ 1.93–95.
[9] A Hellenised Babylonian priest, ca. 330–250 BCE, fragments of whose work are preserved in Alexander Polyhistor.

and set off for Babylon.[10] Berossus says that those people who went to Babylon "founded many cities and rebuilt shrines and founded a new Babylon".[11] Similarly, Josephus tells us that Noah asks God in his prayer that the people who were rescued may found cities and build up new lives. Berossus is cited by Josephus in 1.93, so we know that he was acquainted with Berossus' passage about the Flood and that he identified Noah with Xisouthros.

A further work quoted by Josephus in which other survivors of the Flood are mentioned besides Noah's family, is Nicolaus of Damascus who describes a mountain where refugees found safety at the time of the Flood; in addition to these people, he writes about a man with an ark who is supposed to be the Noah of whom Moses was writing.[12]

And finally there is Pseudo-Eupolemus, a Samaritan writer of whose work only a couple of fragments are preserved.[13] Eusebius quotes him as saying: "Eupolemus in his work *Concerning the Jews* says that the city of Babylon was first founded by those who were saved from the Flood. He also says that they were giants and built the well-known tower".[14] Since the descendants of Noah are nowhere referred to as giants, it may be assumed that these giants mentioned by Pseudo-Eupolemus are, like the survivors in Berossus, Nicolaus and Josephus, distinct from Noah's descendants.[15]

2. *The request*

Noah's main request is to spare the people and never again to inflict such destruction upon them. For, he says, it would be worse if they had to face destruction again than to have been destroyed in the first attempt. This aspect of the request is a remarkable one: Noah thinks it would be unfair if another destruction were to be inflicted, since his people just survived the first deluge because of their goodness; if another disaster were to happen, the good people would suffer twice,[16] whereas the ones who died in the first deluge because they were evil, only suffered once.

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[10] Berossus, *Babyloniaca*, 2.2.2, edition Burstein.
[11] Berossus, *Babyloniaca*, 2.2.4, edition Burstein.
[12] AJ 1.95.
[13] Holladay, *Fragments* Vol. 1, 157–187.
[14] Pseudo-Eupolemus, Fragment 1.2 apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.17.2 (Holladay, vol. 1, 170).
[15] See also Freudenthal, 'Alexander Polyhistor', 91–96.
[16] See also Samuel's prayer at Mizpah, AJ 6.25.

Noah therefore asks God not to visit further wrath upon the earth, a recurrent request in prayers; this will be discussed later.[17] For now it is important to see what Noah wants: he wants the world to be as it was before the Flood. He asks for order to be restored to what it was before (96), for people to lack none of the good things they had before the deluge (98) and for them to grow as old as they had previously (98).[18]

This request to restore order and good things to what they had been before the Flood seems strange, because things were not good then; Noah himself fled because he thought people were acting wrongly. However, Josephus probably means that Noah intended to restore order 'for the righteous ones', as he says in 96: "spare those who survived because of their goodness and those who were judged fit to escape danger". A similar request for an exception to be made for the righteous is a prayer by Abraham,[19] when he prays for the just and good people from Sodom, and asks God not to destroy them along with the wicked. This prayer in turn is parallelled by a long conversation between God and Abraham in Genesis, where Abraham tries to bargain with God about destroying Sodom while there are still some righteous ones in it.[20]

Another prayer in which a similar request is made to distinguish between the good and the bad is Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent. At the end of this long prayer, in which Moses asks God to be his judge and witness in the battle for the priesthood, he says: "(…) save the multitude that follows your commands by guarding that it is without suffering and that it has no part in the punishment of those

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[17] See the discussion of Phinehas' prayer, pp. 125–126.

[18] In 1.75 God limited the age people could attain to 120 years. In this prayer, Noah asks him to reverse that decision. In 99 God says he will fulfil all Noah's prayers, presumably also this request for extended old age. Van der Horst, in his article, 'His days shall be one hundred and twenty years' (in: *Zutot* 2002, Dordrecht 2003, pp. 18–23) overlooked this prayer in his discussion of Josephus' references to this issue; he says that Josephus (and others) were aware of the problem that after the Flood so many people lived much longer than 120 years; according to him Josephus solved this by writing how God carried out his decree in stages (p. 22). However, it is possible that the solution to the problem lies in this prayer, in the request to let people become as old as they did previously, and the remark in 99 that God will fulfil all Noah's prayers. Nevertheless, Josephus had to explain why people in his own age do not grow so old any more; he explains in sections 105–108 that it was because the "ancients" were creatures of God himself, their diet was "more conducive to longevity", and because they had to live this long "for their merits and to promote the utility of their discoveries in geometry and astronomy".

[19] Abraham, AJ 1.199.

[20] Gen 18:16–33.

who have sinned. For *you* know that it is not just to make all Israelites pay penalty together because of the badness of the others".[21]

This kind of request in a prayer presupposes the idea that God is righteous in his punishments: that he is good to people who do good and that he punishes those who do wrong or evil. This corresponds with the idea of God's retribution and providence; these topics will be discussed more thoroughly later in this chapter.[22]

3. *The sacrifice*

As in the biblical text, Noah performs a sacrifice. The purpose of the sacrifice in Genesis and in *Antiquitates*, however, is different. In Genesis, the sacrifice is presumably to thank God for the happy ending. This is how Philo interprets the passage in his *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin*, when he tries to explain why Noah built the altar without being summoned to do so by God.[23] By accompanying the sacrifice with this prayer, however, Josephus alters the purpose of the sacrifice from giving thanks to requesting a favour.

The anthropomorphic statement in the Bible that God was pleased by the smell of Noah's sacrifice gave various authors some trouble. Philo explained it by saying that 'smelling' needed to be understood as 'accepting',[24] as did Pseudo-Philo.[25] The author of Jubilees, on the contrary, seems to have had no such problem with God's possession of a sense of smell, for he describes the sacrifice elaborately and says the smell of all this pleased God.[26] Josephus, however, left the whole sentence out: God makes promises because he loves Noah's righteousness and not because of the smell of his sacrifice. Moreover, the prayer has given God something more to respond to than just the smell of the burnt offering.

In the biblical text, the sacrifice is not accompanied by prayer. As we saw in paragraph 2.1, the Old Testament does not mention prayer in its descriptions of the conduct of sacrifices. However, as we argued in the previous chapter, it became more common later to accompany the sacrifice with prayer, so the fact that Josephus portrays Noah in

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[21] AJ 4.50.
[22] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.
[23] Philo, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* 2.50.
[24] Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 115.
[25] *L.A.B.* 3:8.
[26] *Jub.* 4:25.

this passage as praying at his sacrifice is in line with the practices of his own time.[27]

II. Isaac's Blessing: AJ 1.272–273

> (272) Master of the whole world and creator of all being; because you have bestowed upon my father a great quantity of good things, and you have judged me worthy of the things I possess, and to my descendants you have kindly promised to be for ever a helper and a giver of better things; (273) therefore confirm these [promises] and may you not overlook me because of my present weakness, by reason of which I need you the more. And protect my son graciously and maintain him untouched by every evil by giving him a happy life and possession of good things as much as is in your power to give. Make him frightening to enemies, and to friends valued and pleasing.

The story in which this prayer is embedded is that in which Isaac, on his deathbed, wants to bless his elder son. Isaac has two sons, twin brothers: Jacob and Esau. Esau is the elder and also Isaac's favourite. However, Jacob, supported by his mother Rebecca, tries to steal the right of primogeniture from his brother. When their father, who has become blind, asks Esau to come to his bed so that he may bless him, Jacob pretends he is Esau and thus receives the blessing that was actually meant for Esau as the elder son.

Interestingly, Josephus has omitted a substantial part of the story preceding this prayer, postponing it to a later stage in the story of Isaac and his sons, the incident with the lentil pottage. Before the story of the stolen blessing, Genesis relates that Esau comes back from a hunting trip, very tired and very hungry. Jacob takes advantage of it and asks Esau to sell his birthright in exchange for a cup of the pottage. Esau does so. However, Josephus postpones this incident until after the death of Isaac, when he writes about Esau's departure for Idumaea. At this point, the incident serves merely to explain the etymology of the name of that country; Jacob is not the central character in the passage, in fact, his name is not even mentioned! It seems likely that Josephus did not want to show Jacob in too negative a light. By leaving out the story at the original point, the reader is left with a less damaging view of Jacob; there is only one of the stories of his deceit. When the incident

[27] For a discussion of more prayers-with-sacrifice in Josephus' work see Chapter 5, pp. 243–245.

is referred to at a later stage, it is not to stress the selling of the birthright; all emphasis is then placed on the red colour of the pottage and the nickname that is given to Esau because of it.

Josephus also fails to mention another negative aspect of Jacob, the etymology of his name. While he gives an etymological explanation of Esau's name (which refers to his hairiness) after the reference to his birth, no explanation is given of Jacob's name. The Bible tells us that the two boys struggled inside the womb at the time of their birth in order to be the first to be born. Jacob's name is explained as 'the one who grasps the heel' (it also means 'the one who betrays') because he grasped Esau's heel in order to stop him from being born first.[28] This whole episode is left out by Josephus.

Josephus' attempt to portray Jacob in a more favourable light than in Genesis can also be traced elsewhere in the story. After the first blessing, Esau enters the room and Isaac realises that he has made a mistake. In the biblical text, Isaac reacts as soon as he discovers his mistake but, according to Josephus in *Antiquitates*, he says nothing about it. When Esau asks for another blessing for himself, Isaac says he cannot give it to him. When Esau keeps complaining, Isaac eventually gives in, although he says he cannot revoke the first blessing.

In the biblical text, this blessing is quoted in the same terms as the first. However, in *Antiquitates*, Josephus obviously considers the second blessing of lesser importance. Whilst the first blessing is recorded as one of the few prayers written in direct speech, the second is short, written in indirect speech, and not even in the form of a prayer. Josephus' portrayal of Esau in this part of the story, too, is much more biased than that given in the Bible; moreover, in the biblical text, Isaac is very depressed because of the mistake and he cries his heart out, whereas in *Antiquitates* he is much firmer in refusing to revoke his blessing and denying his ability to do so.

The second blessing also differs in content: in the Bible, Isaac says that Esau will live far from the rich places on earth, and that he will have to serve his brother; but also that he will have the strength to throw this yoke from his neck.[29] However, in *Antiquitates*, Isaac does not mention possible freedom; he only says that, despite the glory he and his descendants will gain as hunters, he will have to serve his brother.[30]

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[28] Gen 25:26.
[29] Gen 27:40.
[30] AJ 1.275.

This second blessing will be treated in greater detail after a discussion of the prayer.

We may conclude that, to Josephus, Jacob was far more important than Esau, Jacob being the patriarch of Israel and the Jewish people, whereas Esau was to become the ancestor of the people of Edom. Feldman suggests that Esau had already been identified with Rome by Josephus' day. We do not, however, have any evidence that this was already the case in the first century CE;[31] it is therefore not a safe assumption to make. Feldman uses it to argue that Josephus makes a great effort not to denigrate Esau and depict him as a slave in order not to offend his Roman patrons.[32] Feldman may have succeeded in showing that Josephus' portrayal of Esau was on the whole less negative than that in the Bible,[33] but to conclude that he did so because of Esau's identification with Rome is an over-statement.

Both the prayer for Jacob and Esau's blessing seem to be more important for the portrayal of Jacob (and consequently Esau) than for that of Isaac. It is obvious that both prayers are recorded because they were present in the biblical text; also, Josephus needed them at this point. He adapted them to his purpose, as a means to portray Jacob, the patriarch of the people of Israel. The only thing he did to soften Isaac's image was to mention his illness in the prayer, as we will discuss later.

When we compare the form of the prayer to that in Genesis, the first thing we notice is that in Genesis the prayer is actually a blessing addressed to Jacob (or Esau), whereas Josephus has turned it into a prayer addressed to God. The favours Isaac asks for in the two texts are similar, but what precedes them is very different: in the Genesis text, Isaac first exclaims how sweet the smell of his son is—it is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. In *Antiquitates*, Isaac starts by appeasing God, first with the two invocations and then with the three favours God has granted his father, himself and his descendants. The differences in form follow, in my opinion, from the different focus of the two texts. Let us now therefore consider the content of the prayer.

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[31] Herr: "The identification of Esau with Rome is not found in the literature of the Second Temple Period (…) The identification appears first, apparently, in an aggadah of the period following the Bar Kokhba War (132–135 CE)", 'Esau' and 'Edom', resp. 858 and 379.

[32] Feldman, *Josephus's*, 314–324.

[33] Although in my view this is not the case in this prayer.

A. *The prayer*

The structure of this prayer is very clear and appears to follow that of a classical Greek prayer: 'invocation-argument-request'.[34] First Isaac placates God with his opening words by addressing him as "master of the whole world and creator of all being". After this he reminds God of his past deeds: he has bestowed upon father Abraham a great quantity of good things; he has deemed Isaac worthy of the things he possesses and to Isaac's descendants he has promised to be a helper and a giver of better things. After these reminders he asks God to help this time, too. He actually specifies the ways in which he wants God to help: he asks God to protect his son, to give him possessions and happiness and to make him frightening to enemies and pleasing to friends.

The prayer uses a prayer formula, based on past precedent, which is commonly dubbed *da-quia-dedisti*: 'give because you have given'. God has made promises before and has done good things for Isaac and his family. Therefore Isaac asks God to listen to him again. As Pulleyn shows, there are more examples of this kind of prayer in non-Jewish Greek literature.[35] According to Von Fritz this style of praying is related to the fact that in the classical period the belief was no longer prevalent that gods were dependent on sacrifices. A person who prays in this manner reminds the god of favours conferred in the past, rather than of sacrifices performed by himself. The prayer further implies, among other things, that "since the god has helped him before, he must be a person after the God's heart, so the god will surely help him again".[36]

1. *The invocation*

The prayer starts with an invocation in which Isaac names God the "master of the whole world and creator of all being". The first form of address, δέσποτα, appears to be the most common in Josephus' prayers: of the eleven prayers he writes in direct speech, there are ten in which the person praying invokes God, and seven times he does so using the word δέσποτα.[37] In three more instances the word is used as invocation elsewhere in the prayer.[38]

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[34] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 132; Ausfeld, 'De graecorum', 515: invocatio-pars epica-prex ipsa.
[35] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 17, 17 n. 3.
[36] Von Fritz, 'Greek', 21.
[37] Isaac's blessing, 1.272; Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, 4.40; Solomon's first prayer at the Temple, 7.107; Zerubbabel, 11.64; Nehemiah pleading for his countrymen, 11.162; Mordecai, 11.230; Onias, 14.24; Izates, 20.90.
[38] AJ 4.46; 5.41; 8.111.

The word δεσπότης carries the meaning of master in the sense of 'lord of the house or family', or even 'despot', 'absolute ruler'. It is also used in conjunction with the word 'slave'. This could point to a conception of God as absolute ruler over the world and of the Jewish people as slaves of God. However, according to Harding, δεσπότης is also used in non-Jewish Greek invocations.[39] Although they are hard to find, there are a couple of Greek passages where gods are called masters, for example in Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.2.13, where Xenophon says: "for to no human creature do you pay homage as master (δεσπότην), but to the gods alone", and in Euripides' *Hippolytus* 88, where the old servant (θεράπων) says: θεοὺς γὰρ δεσπότας καλεῖν χρέων, "because it is necessary to call the gods masters".

Besides these Greek examples, there are also several Jewish passages where God is indicated by the word δεσπότης.[40] In 2 and 3 Maccabees there are even four passages in which the word occurs as an invocation to God in a prayer.[41] Other Jewish authors, too, use the word to refer to God; Artapanus writes that Moses went to Pharaoh, saying that the "master of the universe" (τὸν τῆς οἰκουμένης δεσπότην) had ordered him to release the Jews.[42] Ezekiel the Tragedian uses the word twice; first as an invocation (by Moses) saying, δέσποθ', ἵλεως γενοῦ ("master, be gracious");[43] and secondly, when he describes how to ensure that death will pass by one's house on the eve of the exodus; he says this will be called Passover: "Keep this festival for the master" (ταύτην δ' ἑορτὴν δεσπότῃ τηρήσετε).[44]

In the New Testament, the word is used twice in a prayer; first by Simeon when Jesus is taken to the Temple by his parents as a little boy, and later by Peter and John who pray to God after their release by the priests and the Temple guard.[45] In both instances, God is addressed as δεσπότης.

Sometimes δεσπότης is qualified further, as here in Isaac's blessing, δέσποτα παντὸς αἰῶνος ("master of the whole world"),[46] and Josephus also does so in Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, which he starts

[39] Harding, 'Making', 57.
[40] See also Marcus, 'Divine', 61–62.
[41] 2 Macc 15:22 and 3 Macc 2:2; 6:5,10.
[42] Artapanus apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27.22.
[43] Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 124.
[44] Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 188.
[45] Luke 2:29 (Simeon) and Acts 4:24 (Peter and John).
[46] δέσποτα παντὸς αἰῶνος is parallel to the Hebrew רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, see also Harding, 'Making', 57 and Schlatter, *Wie*, 9.

with the words, δέσποτα τῶν ἐπ᾽ οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης ("master of heaven and earth and sea"). We find it in other Jewish literature as well. Moses' invocation in AJ 4 is like Judith's, who calls God δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς ("master of heavens and earth").[47] Wisom of Solomon has δεσπότης twice in combination with πάντων: 'master of all'.[48] And another example is the prayer of Simon the high priest in 3 Maccabees 2:2, who says δέσποτα πάσης κτίσεως ("Master of all creation").

Calling God δημιουργός, creator, is not common. Josephus does so on only two further occasions, namely, when he is writing about Abraham and says that he was the first one who had the courage to declare publicly that God is one, while saying that he is the creator of the universe (δημιουργός).[49] The second time is in David's prayer for Solomon. David calls God "creator of human and divine things", which may just as well mean 'everything' and thus 'all being', as in the other texts mentioned above. A related word is used in AJ 12.23 where Aristeas tells King Ptolemy Philadelphus to set people free, "because all men are the handiwork (δημιούργημα) of God".[50]

In the Septuagint the word is used only once, though not with reference to God, and in the New Testament, too, there is a single instance in Hebrews 11:10, a reference to Abraham who "was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder (δημιουργός) is God".

Plato on the other hand used the word more often, again with reference to God as creator of the universe. The clearest example is in *Timaeus* 28c–29a, where Plato wrote:

> Now to discover the maker and father of this universe were a task indeed; and having discovered him, to declare him unto all men were a thing impossible. However, let us return and inquire further concerning the cosmos,—after which of the models did its architect construct it? Was it after that which is self-identical and uniform, or after that which has come into existence? Now if so be that this cosmos is beautiful and its constructor good, it is plain that he fixed his gaze on the Eternal.

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[47] Jdt 9:12.
[48] Wis 6:7; 8:3.
[49] AJ 1.155.
[50] God as κτίσας, creator, occurs only 7 times in Josephus' work, mostly in *De bello Judaico* (BJ 3.354, 356, 369, 379; 5.377; AJ 1.27; 4.314); all instances, except AJ 1.27 on the creation of heaven and earth, refer to God as creator of men.

Plato uses three different words here to denote God as creator of the universe: ποιητής ('maker'), τεκταινόμενος ('architect') and δημιουργός ('constructor'). This is developed in his *Republic* (530a), where he says that an astronomer who turned his eyes upon the movements of the stars would be willing to concede that the artisan (δημιουργός) of heaven fashioned it and all that it contains.[51] These are not the only passages in Plato's work where this idea is expressed, but given the fact that the *Timaeus* had an enormous impact in late antiquity, it may be said that the use of δημιουργός meaning creator was especially strongly influenced by this work.[52]

A contemporary of Josephus, Epictetus, wrote in his *Discourses* (2.8.21), "but the works of God are capable of movement, have the breath of life, can make use of external impressions, and pass judgement upon them. Do you dishonour the workmanship of this craftsman (δημιουργός), when you are yourself that workmanship?"

It was apparently common to invoke God using two words or more, as Josephus quotes Isaac as doing: δεσπότης and δημιουργός. A double invocation of God is used by Josephus in two other passages. One is a very comprehensive invocation (with no less than three invocation formulas) in a prayer said by King David, which we mentioned above; though not quoted directly, it is quite lengthy. Josephus writes that David invoked God in the following terms: πατέρα τε καὶ γένεσιν τῶν ὅλων, δημιουργὸν ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ θείων, οἷς αὐτὸν ἐκόσμησε, προστάτην τε καὶ κηδεμόνα γένους τῶν Ἑβραίων καὶ τῆς τούτων εὐδαιμονίας ἧς τε αὐτῷ βασιλείας ἔδωκεν ("father and source of all, creator of things human and divine, with which he had adorned himself, protector and guardian of the Hebrew race, its prosperity and of the kingdom which he had given them").[53] The prayer of Onias (14.24) starts with the invocation θεὲ βασιλευ τῶν ὅλῶν ("God, king of all").

The same style of address occurs in other Jewish prayers; for example in Simon's prayer in 3 Maccabees mentioned above; he starts his prayer with κύριε κύριε, βασιλεῦ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ δέσποτα πάσης κτίσεως ("Lord, Lord, king of heavens and master of all creation"). Another example is again in Judith 9:12, where Judith invokes God in her prayer as follows: ὁ θεὸς τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ θεὸς κληρονομίας

[51] Plato, *Respublica* 530a; see also Plato, *Timaeus* 28a, 31a and 40c.
[52] Runia, *Philo*, 38–57.
[53] AJ 7.380.

Ισραήλ, δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς, κτίστα τῶν ὑδάτων, βασιλεῦ πάσης κτίσεως σου ("God of my father and God of the inheritance of Israel, master of heavens and earth, creator of the waters, king of your whole creation").[54]

From the wording of the invocation in this prayer we may conclude that Josephus' character, Isaac, addresses God as a God who is master of the world and who created everything. Isaac is confident that God can grant his request, namely, to make his son wealthy and happy. God is master of everything and can therefore provide for the things Isaac asks.

2. *Recalling past favours*

Isaac starts by referring to the things God gave his father, saying: "You have bestowed upon my father μεγάλη ἰσχύς ἀγαθῶν". This Greek phrase can have several meanings, and it is difficult to determine which meaning Josephus had in mind. The literal translation would be 'a great power of good things', but this is not clear in English, either. It can also mean 'a great power, namely, good things', in which case the genitive is explicatory. Another interpretation is 'a great quantity of good things'. Although 'quantity' is not the usual meaning of ἰσχύς, the context seems to force us to suggest this meaning.

The next question that comes to mind is, what 'good things'? In discussing CA 2.195–197 earlier, we already showed that 'good things' may refer to non-material things, namely health, well-being or skill. In this prayer, too, this meaning appears to stand out, especially since it parallels 'a happy life'. It may be possible to be even more precise. Considering the importance in the story of Abraham of having children,[55] this is another possible meaning; or perhaps he means the happy life that Abraham lived and his relationship with God, although he does not say this in so many words.[56] Only in AJ 1.223 does Josephus write, "Abraham thus reposed all his own happiness on the hope of leaving his son unscathed when he departed this life. This object he indeed attained by the will of God". Although it would perhaps be a bit odd

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[54] See also Jonathan and Nehemiah in 2 Macc 1:24–25; Mordecai in Add Esth 4:17[b], 17[f]; Eleazar in 3 Macc 6:2. For a more detailed discussion of this subject see Corley, 'Divine', 366–372.

[55] See AJ 1.183, 187–190, 191.

[56] The relationship with God is set out for example in AJ 1.155 and the story of the binding of Isaac in AJ 1.222–236.

if Isaac referred to himself as 'the good things' that his father received, it is in line with the other passages stressing Abraham's love for his children. I would therefore consider it quite in character for Josephus' Isaac to remind God of the happy life that Abraham had lived, which naturally included his wife Sarah and his children.[57]

The promises God made are to be found earlier in book 1. When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac (which was requested by God), God prevented him, saying that it was only a test. He promised Abraham that he would never "fail to regard with the tenderest care both him and his race; his son should attain to extreme old age and, after a life of felicity, bequeath to a virtuous and lawfully begotten offspring a great dominion", and "that their race would swell into a multitude of nations with increasing wealth (…)".[58]

These are the promises Isaac is now referring to. He recalls them to remind God of the things he said and did in the past, and asks him to listen to his prayer now, too. This aspect has already been discussed in the introduction to the discussion of this prayer.

3. *Isaac's weakness*

A somewhat strange detail is Isaac's saying: "May you not overlook me because of my present weakness, by reason of which I need you the more". In the biblical text there is nothing like this, so it is definitely an addition by Josephus. Both Harding and Feldman ignore the sentence in their commentaries on this passage.[59]

In 1.267 Isaac says to Esau that his old age, as well as his blindness, prevents him from ministering to God. After having spoken about this, he asks Esau to catch something in the hunt and make him supper, after which he will ask God's blessing for him. It is not explained why Esau should make supper (besides that he might want to eat), but quite possibly it is connected to Isaac's inability to minister to God. There is no mention of Isaac's inability to sacrifice or to minister to God in Genesis.[60]

This conversation between Isaac and Esau gives a logical explanation for Isaac's reference in the prayer to his weakness; because of his

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[57] From AJ 1.193 and the fact that he was present at Abraham's funeral, we may conclude that Abraham loved his first son, Ishmael, as well.

[58] AJ 1.234–235.

[59] Harding, 'Making', 58; Feldman, *Flavius*, 107.

[60] Gen 27:1 ff.

blindness and his age he cannot serve God any more by sacrificing, and he hopes that God, despite this, will still listen to him. It may very well be that Josephus put it in the prayer to underline Isaac's weakness and to excuse him for the mistake he made in blessing Jacob instead of Esau, or to explain how the mistake came to be made.

4. *Favours asked for his son*

Isaac requests three favours for his son; Josephus mentions things in groups of three on several occasions, for instance, in Moses' prayer at the Red Sea.[61] A more detailed discussion of this figure of speech is to be found in the treatment of that prayer.[62]

Isaac's requests are, to protect his son graciously; to maintain him untouched by every evil by giving him a happy life and possession of good things as much as is in [God's] power to give; and make him frightening to enemies and to friends valued and pleasing.

First Isaac asks God to protect his son graciously. This request has no literal parallel in the biblical text. The terms εὐμενής and εὐμένεια are the ones in which Josephus most frequently expresses God's benevolence or graciousness.[63] In AJ 4.180, he quotes Moses as saying, "O children of Israel, there is for all mankind but one source of felicity—a gracious God". And in AJ 1.111 he comments on the fact that the people do not listen to God when he tells them to set out and settle somewhere else because the population is increasing, saying: "but they, never thinking that they owed their blessings to his benevolence (εὐμένεια) and regarding their own might as the cause of their felicity, refused to obey". Josephus uses the word εὐμενής 53 times, of which 42 refer to God;[64] it occurs 10 times in prayers.[65]

Although the words occur in the Letter of Aristeas (254) and Wisdom (6:16), they are not, as Marcus remarks,[66] found in the Septuagint as an

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[61] AJ 2.335–337.

[62] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, p. 98.

[63] Schlatter *Wie sprach*, 62.

[64] On one other occasion (AJ 19.345) the people address King Agrippa "as a god" saying, "may you be propitious (εὐμενής) to us"; although I do not count this instance as referring to God, it is related.

[65] Noah after the Flood, AJ 1.96–98; Isaac's blessing, AJ 1.272–273 (2x); People at Mount Sinai, AJ 3.78; Michal AJ 7.87; David asking for forgiveness, AJ 7.321, Benaiah, AJ 7.357; Solomon's second prayer at the Temple, AJ 8.111–117 (112); The people repenting, AJ 10.64; Zerubbabel, AJ 11.64.

[66] Marcus, 'Divine', 49, 76.

attribute of God. In Greek prayers, on the other hand, the words occur commonly, as in Aeschylus, *Supplices* 686 for instance, where the chorus sings, "and to all the young people may Lyceus be graciously disposed". Another example is Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 204, where Lysistrata, when wine is poured by a servant, calls out, "O Queen Persuasion, and O Loving Cup, accept the offerings by these women graciously (εὐμενής)". Yet another noteworthy passage is from Euripides, *Alcestis* 791, where Heracles says: "Honor Aphrodite too, sweetest of the gods to mortals, for she is a kind (εὐμενής) goddess". It is clear that Josephus learned the words from his Greek surroundings.

The concept of asking for God's protection against evils from outside appears only once more in Josephus' work, namely in a prayer by Samson who asks God to protect him from evil.[67] David, in his prayer for Solomon, addresses God as protector and guardian of the Hebrew nation.[68]

The second request, to "maintain him untouched by every evil", has no parallel in the biblical text, either. Josephus amplifies, "by giving him a happy life and possession of good things", from which we may conclude that by 'evil' Josephus means unhappiness and perhaps even poverty. What the possession of good things means may possibly be derived from the biblical account which Josephus changed: "May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness—an abundance of grain and new wine".[69] This could equate 'good things' with food and drink. It is very likely, though, that to Josephus it seemed too materialistic to ask for these things, and he therefore changed this into 'good things'. Asking for good things was very common (despite what he says about not asking for good things in prayer in his *Contra Apionem*).[70]

The Greek word for 'happy (life)' Josephus uses is εὐδαίμων. This is not a biblical term. 'Happiness', however, was a much discussed topic in Josephus' day and earlier.[71] Plato and Aristotle wrote about it on several occasions.[72] The word εὐδαίμων, originally meaning 'one who has a favourable deity', comes from the notion, fundamental to popular

[67] Samson, AJ 5.302.
[68] David's prayer for Solomon, AJ 7.380.
[69] Gen 27:28.
[70] For further discussion of this subject see pp. 39–42.
[71] See also Mason, *Flavius*, 185.
[72] E.g. Plato, *Respublica* 621c1–d3; *Politicus* 311b7–c6; Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 10.6–8. See also Josephus, David's prayer for Solomon, AJ 7.380–381.

Greek religion, that "human well-being and adversity are dispensed by the gods".[73] Philosophers in the Hellenistic age were all, as Long says, busy seeking an answer to the question Plato and Aristotle had already asked: "What is happiness or well-being and how does a man achieve it?"[74] The term is used in all three of the main Hellenistic philosophies, Scepticism, Epicureanism and Stoicism, but the last two "tackled the question most successfully".[75] Seneca wrote a work entitled, *De vita beata*, the Latin equivalent for εὐδαιμονία; Cicero wrote about *vita beata* as well.[76]

As Runia remarks, the term cannot actually be translated simply as 'happiness', because the expression has different connotations in English and in Greek. The Greek word εὐδαιμονία has nothing to do with the emotion of *feeling* happy, as does the word 'happiness' in English; in Greek it is more objective in nature, something that can be determined according to some established and commonly accepted criteria, more like welfare and fortune. Those criteria may be debated, but always within clear-cut parameters.[77] Moreover, εὐδαιμονία lasts for a whole lifetime and not just for a moment, depending on a certain act or situation. In Greek thinking, εὐδαιμονία is a state which persists throughout one's life, and it is seen as a final stage, τέλος.[78]

The Greek term εὐδαιμονία has a theological origin, and is derived from the word δαίμων, 'deity'. However, this δαίμων dwells *inside* the human being, and well-being or happiness is not therefore something that depends on the caprices of a deity, but it is determined by the human being himself. The concept of εὐδαιμονία is also, since deities are immortal, connected with immortality, insofar as man can achieve it.[79]

In other words, Josephus takes a specifically Greek concept, εὐδαιμονία, and applies it here, in Isaac's prayer, to express the request, but he modifies it by making it dependant upon God. It is one of many examples that show how Josephus used Greek expressions and concepts to express his ideas.

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[73] Long, *Hellenistic*, 42.
[74] Long, *Hellenistic*, 6.
[75] Long, *Hellenistic*, 6.
[76] Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae* 4.84, 5.119–120.
[77] Runia, *Bios*, 12.
[78] Runia, *Bios*, 13–16.
[79] Runia, *Bios*, 10–11.

The sentence, ἀγαθῶν ὅσων σοι δύναμις παρασχεῖν ("as much as is in your power to give") also appears in two other prayers Josephus wrote. Firstly, in a prayer by Michal, David's wife, who prays for David. She asks God to grant David all those things which it would be possible for God to provide: πάνθ' ὅσα παρασχεῖν αὐτῷ δυνατόν ("as much as is possible for him to give").[80] Secondly, in the second prayer by King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, when he says: "And I ask you henceforth to grant the people that are esteemed by you whatever a god has power to (ὅσα θεῷ δύναμις)".[81]

Besides in Josephus' work, a similar expression is to be found in the New Testament, in Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane. In Mark 14:36, Jesus prays: "Father, everything is possible for you (πάντα δυνατά σοι), take this cup away from me". The expression used in Mark conveys more certainty about God's power than those in Josephus, which may bear more resemblance to Matthew 26:39, where Jesus' prayer is formulated differently, saying: "My father, if it is possible (εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν), let this cup pass away from me"; and he adds: "not as I want but as you want". Luke 22:42 used a different wording, having Jesus say: "Father, if you wish (εἰ βούλει), take this cup away from me".

A pagan parallel is found in one of Pindar's Nemean Odes, when he asks Zeus to postpone an armed contest, saying: "If it is possible (εἰ δυνατόν), son of Cronus, I would like to put off for as long as I can this fierce trial of empurpled spears".[82] Unlike Josephus, but as in both Matthew and Luke, Pindar's prayer shows that he recognises that his request may not be what Zeus wants.[83] However, these parallels show us that using an expression like this in a prayer was common usage, and Josephus adopted the custom.

The third and last favour, phrased as a *chiasmus*, "make him frightening to enemies and to friends valued and pleasing", does not have an exact parallel in the biblical text, but it resembles Gen 27:29: "may those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed". Josephus has changed the wording in such a way that Jacob remains in control: in *Antiquitates*, it is hoped that he will be frightening or friendly, whereas

[80] Michal, AJ 7.87.
[81] AJ 8.113.
[82] Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 9.28 ff.
[83] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 208.

in Genesis the initiative lies with his opponents to curse or bless him, which will then be reflected.

A close parallel to the expression Josephus uses is to be found in a prayer of Solon (the sixth century BCE Athenian law-giver) in which he asks to become "sweet for friends, but pungent to enemies" (εἶναι δὲ γλυκὺν ὧδε φίλοισ', ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρόν).[84] However, although it is, as Harding says, "tempting to see an allusion here",[85] it is not very likely that Josephus had this sentence in mind when he wrote Isaac's prayer, especially since there is no evidence that Josephus read Solon's work.[86]

5. *What was left out*

It has to be noted that Josephus left out two important elements from the biblical blessing. To begin with, he left out the wish, "may nations serve you and peoples bow down to you".[87] Feldman argues that Josephus did so because he was afraid to offend the Romans (and other nations) by saying that other nations should serve the Jews (personified here by Jacob).[88] I think that the underlying thought may have been slightly different: Josephus may not have been afraid to offend others, but was probably thinking more of the fact that this wish was not in keeping with the fact that the Jews had recently (20 years before at the most) lost a war and been subjugated by the Romans.

The second element Josephus left out is the sentence, "Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you", a remnant of which is to be found in Jacob's second blessing, for Esau, which we will discuss now.

B. *The second blessing: AJ 1.275*

> His father, moved by his [i.e. Esau's] tears, then said that he would be distinguished in the chase and for strength of body in arms and in labours of all kinds, and that he and his offspring would henceforward reap an age-long reputation, but that he would serve his brother.

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[84] Elegia 1.5, in: E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925), 1.17.

[85] Harding, 'Making', 58.

[86] Josephus mentions Solon only once; when he writes about Moses as lawgiver in *Contra Apionem* he says, "for as for the Lycurguses, and Solons, and Zaleucus Locrensis, and all those legislators who are so admired by the Greeks, they seem to be of yesterday, if compared with our legislator", CA 2.154.

[87] Gen 27:29.

[88] Feldman, *Flavius*, 107.

Unlike the first blessing, for Jacob, the second that Isaac pronounces is not recorded as a prayer in *Antiquitates*, although in Genesis it is written as a blessing in the very same way as the first. Josephus, however, just says that Isaac "said" (ἔφασκε) some words, making them sound more like a prediction than a wish or a prayer. So although officially it cannot really be called a blessing, for the sake of convenience, the term will be used here.

As we have already said in the introduction, Josephus appears to relegate this blessing, and indeed Esau's position, to a subordinate position. Isaac is less moved by his mistake than he is in the Bible, and less willing to change matters for the better. As for the content, there are some interesting points in Isaac's predictions for his son.

Josephus changed the first element in the biblical text, "your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above", together with "you will live by the sword" to a prediction that Esau would become "famous for the chase and for strength of body in arms and in labour of all kinds". This seems a better prospect than Esau gets in the Bible. However, the prediction that he will serve his brother is maintained by Josephus and even strengthened; Josephus omits an important element from the biblical text, namely, that he will eventually throw the yoke of his brother off his neck, when he will get restless.

As we said in the introduction, Feldman sees Esau's improved prospects in *Antiquitates* as an indication that Josephus did not want to offend the Romans, with whom Esau was alleged to have become identified. However, as Spilsbury says, these theories "are not backed up by substantial argumentation, and in the final analysis Josephus does not provide the means whereby they might be confirmed".[89] Moreover, the prediction that Esau will serve his brother (without throwing the yoke off his neck) is overlooked in this view; if indeed Josephus had wanted to ingratiate himself with the Romans by way of this prayer he would surely have changed this element as well.

III. Jacob at Bethel: AJ 1.284

> These things God foretold Jacob; and being overjoyed at the visions and the given information, he polished the stones on which such great blessings

[89] Spilsbury, *Image*, 76.

> were made, and he made a vow to sacrifice on them [i.e. the stones] if he would return unharmed, having gained a livelihood, and to offer to God a tenth of his asset after having arrived [back again]. He judged the place to be very honourable giving it the name Bethel; this means 'hearth of God' in the language of the Greeks.

Before discussing Jacob's vow, it should be said that actually, according to the definition as given in the first chapter, this vow is not a prayer, since there is no explicit second-person address to God. However, a vow is still, like a blessing or a curse, an utterance in which one counts on some interference by God; and thus, although it is not in fact stated, it is implied that the words are directed at God, and that he hears them and acts upon them. Therefore I believe this vow deserves to be discussed in this investigation.

The context of the vow is the same in *Antiquitates* and Genesis. After Jacob has fled from his home country, he sleeps at the place he later calls 'Bethel'. There he has a dream in which God presents himself to Jacob at the top of a ladder, and tells him not to give up for he will be with him.[90] When Jacob wakes up, he realises how special the place is and pronounces his vow.

The content of the vow is about the same as it is in the biblical text,[91] though Josephus has shortened it slightly and adjusted one promise. In both Genesis and *Antiquitates*, Jacob's condition for fulfilling his promise is that he wants to return safe and sound. In Genesis this is specified: "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house", whereas in *Antiquitates* Jacob only says he wants to return "with an unharmed life". Returning "to his father's house" is not explicitly mentioned in Josephus' text.

At the conclusion of both vows Jacob promises to give one tenth of his assets; however, the first promise he makes is somewhat different in the two accounts. In Genesis Jacob says that if he returns safely, "then the Lord will be my God". In *Antiquitates*, however, Jacob promises that he will perform a sacrifice on the stone. Therefore, his return may perhaps be understood as returning to this place rather than to his father's house.

How do we explain the difference between 'the Lord will be my God' and 'I will sacrifice on this stone'? It is possible that Josephus took it

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[90] For a discussion of this dream see Gnuse, *Dreams*, 148–150.
[91] Gen 28:20–22.

for granted that 'the Lord' was already 'Jacob's God'. In that case, it might have seemed strange to him that Jacob would have any reservations about calling the Lord "his God", and therefore wrote that Jacob vowed that he would sacrifice if he returned safely, rather than that only then would he be his God; this interpretation also fits in with the idea of Josephus doing his best to show Jacob in a better light than in the Bible.[92] It is also possible that Josephus meant the same thing, but expressed it differently: that Jacob would prove that the Lord was his God by sacrificing to him. Either way, the idea behind the vow is the same: once Jacob has returned safely, the stone will be the place for worshipping God, as the biblical text also says ("this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house") and as the name Jacob gives to the place, Bethel, indicates.

A. *The prayer*

1. *A vow*

The special feature about this passage is that it is a vow. The Greek word for vow used here, as well as in the Septuagint, εὐχή, shows that a vow may be regarded as a kind of prayer, even though, as I said in the introduction, it does not entirely fit the definition. A vow uses the prayer formula *da-ut-dem*, 'give so that I will give'.[93]

Jacob's is not the only vow that occurs in Josephus' work. There are three more, all of which occur in the source text as well. The first is the vow Jephthah makes before the battle: he promises that if he is victorious, he will sacrifice the first living creature that he should meet on his return, which turns out to be his daughter. Although Josephus gives the wording of the passage in Judges in indirect rather than direct speech, the content of the vow is the same in the two texts.[94] The second is Hannah's vow, asking for a son. She promises God that if she has a son she will dedicate his life to the service of God, and that his life will be different than that of other people. This vow is also given in the first book of Samuel, although Josephus did some paraphrasing.[95] The third vow is one by Darius, though not one made at that moment, but a reference to a vow made in the past: he promised to bring back the

[92] See the discussion of Isaac's blessing, pp. 63–65.

[93] According to Pulleyn there are many examples of this kind of praying in for example Homer's *Iliad*: Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 17.

[94] Jephthah, AJ 5.263; Judg 11:30–31.

[95] Hannah's vow, AJ 5.344; 1 Sam 1:11.

vessels of God that were still in Babylon to the Temple in Jerusalem.[96] The king is also reminded of this promise in 1 Esdras 4:43–44. As we see, all the vows in Josephus' work may be traced back to their source, and in content they are the same as in the source text. Furthermore, of the few vows quoted in the Jewish Bible,[97] Josephus omits only the vow made by the ship's crew in the Book of Jonah; the vow of the people of Israel in Numbers 21 has not been included by Josephus since he has omitted the entire story. Moreover, there is no instance in which Josephus introduces a vow, where his source does not have one. It is therefore safe to conclude that Josephus did not particularly favour vows as a literary form to use in his writings.

IV. Amram: AJ 2.211

> And he turned to God in supplication, beseeching him to take some pity on the people who did not make any transgression regarding the religious worship of him, and to give them deliverance from the evil things they were suffering at this time, and from the prospect of the destruction of their nation.

Remarkably enough—as far as I know—this prayer has not been discussed in any modern publication. The emphasis is always on the dream that follows. Those writers who mention it at all (Attridge, Feldman and Gnuse)[98] neglect the content and concentrate on God's response to the prayer in the form of the dream. Nevertheless, there are points of interest about this prayer which I shall come back to, after discussing the context.

Amram[99] is the father of Moses. He says this prayer before Moses is born (that is, while his wife is pregnant), because the Egyptian king has ordered all Hebrew boys to be killed. One of the interesting features of this story about Amram in Josephus' narrative is that it does not occur in the biblical text. The name Amram is given later in Exodus, when

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[96] Darius, AJ 11.31.

[97] Gen 28:20 (Jacob, the present text); Num 21:2 (the people of Israel before a fight against the Canaanite king Arad); Judg 11:30 (Jephthah; AJ 5.263); 1 Sam 1:11 (Hannah; AJ 5.344); 2 Sam 15:8 (reference to a vow made by Absalom in the past; AJ 7.196 makes the reference as well, without recording the content); Jonah 1:16 (ship's crew after throwing Jonah into the sea).

[98] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 94–95; Feldman *Josephus's*, 379; Gnuse, *Dreams*, 216.

[99] Josephus uses the Greek version of the name: Amaram.

the family lines of Moses and his brother Aaron are summarised. All that is said about him in the Bible is that he was the son of Kohath, and: "Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years".[100]

In *Antiquitates*, on the other hand, Amram occupies a more prominent place. Indeed, in AJ 2.210–220 he is the main character and this passage is used as a prologue to the story of Moses. Josephus starts by saying that Amram was very concerned that as a result of Pharaoh's orders the Jewish people might become extinct, especially since his own wife was pregnant. He then says the prayer which we are discussing. A large part of the passage about Amram consists of a dream in which God comes to speak to him and predicts the future of his unborn son and the salvation from the Egyptians he will effect.[101] After this dream Josephus tells us about Moses' birth (which is without pain, so that the guards do not hear that there is a woman in labour), and how they are able to feed him for three months. The decision to expose Moses and put him in a basket in the river is made jointly by both parents, whereas in Exodus the mother does so on her own.

Another work in which Amram also plays an important part is Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*.[102] In this work Amram joins a gathering of the Hebrews, who are mourning and groaning, saying that they had better not approach their wives any more so as to stop producing offspring. However, Amram tells them not to be so pessimistic and reminds them of God's covenant with Abraham, because of which, he says, he refuses to obey Pharaoh's decree, and will produce sons. He urges the others to do the same. Only after this speech does he obtain God's approval and goes home and marries a wife of his own tribe. They have two children: Aaron and Maria (as Miriam is called in the *Biblical Antiquities*). Then the author skips ten years and tells us that Maria has a dream in which a man tells her about her future brother; this boy will be thrown into the water and eventually he will save the people from the Egyptians. Her parents, however, do not believe her.[103]

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[100] Exod 6:20.

[101] An exhaustive discussion of this dream is given in Gnuse, *Dreams*, 162–164 and 206–225.

[102] *L.A.B.* 9:1–16.

[103] This is, of course, completely different from Josephus, where Amram himself has the dream.

Gnuse gives a detailed analysis of the story as it is treated in Pseudo-Philo, Josephus and other Jewish sources.[104] Unfortunately, he completely leaves the prayer out of consideration. All he writes about it is that, instead of Amram's long speech in Pseudo-Philo, Josephus has a "pious prayer". Gnuse feels that this may possibly be because Josephus thought the speech too revolutionary, or because Josephus drew on an earlier version of the account.[105] However, I do not think that Josephus and Pseudo-Philo were based on diverging versions of the same account, because there are too many differences between their stories to imply a similar source or tradition. In *Antiquitates*, Amram is the one who experiences the dream, whereas in Pseudo-Philo it is Miriam; the prayer Amram pronounces is absent in Pseudo-Philo; and, in *Antiquitates*, Amram is the one responsible for putting Moses on the water, whereas in Pseudo-Philo it appears to be Jochebed. My own feeling is that either Josephus got the story from a Jewish tradition other than Pseudo-Philo, or that they each made up a story around the character of Amram.

It is noteworthy that Amram plays such an important part in Josephus' version. Even in comparison to Pseudo-Philo's, where Amram is also quite a presence with his long speech and his readiness to take the initiative, Amram's role is remarkably prominent in *Antiquitates*: he is the one who dreams, he is the one who prays and he is the one who saves Moses. This would appear to tally with the view that Josephus prefers men to women, and that he wanted the story of the greatest figure in Jewish history to begin with a man, as Feldman claims.[106] In spite of Bailey's assertion that there are several places where Josephus is less of a misogynist, especially when describing the matriarchs,[107] this does not exclude the possibility that Josephus did not wish to allot such an important moment in history to a woman, and, in telling the story transferred it to a man instead.

The content of the prayer is also remarkable. The sentence preceding the prayer says that Amram was concerned for his wife because she was pregnant. Then he turns to God. In his prayer, however, he prays for the whole community; he asks God to help the whole Jewish nation, which includes himself and his wife.

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[104] Gnuse, *Dreams*, 212–225.
[105] Gnuse, *Dreams*, 216.
[106] Feldman, *Josephus's*, 379.
[107] Gnuse, *Dreams*, 208; Bailey, 'Josephus' portrayal', 157–176.

This is in striking agreement with Josephus' statement about prayer in *Contra Apionem*. In CA 2.196 he states that one should first pray for common safety and only then for oneself.[108] This is exactly what Amram does here: he asks for deliverance for everyone, and only by implication for himself and his wife, too. However, the fact that Josephus makes Amram pray for the rescue of the Jewish people could equally well reflect his knowledge that Amram's wife is pregnant with the person who will in time be their rescuer.

A. *The prayer*

1. *Taking pity*

The word οἶκτος, 'pity', is often used by Josephus. It occurs only three times in a prayer, however: in the first book of *Antiquitates*, when Hagar asks God for pity before running off into the desert because she is afraid of being punished by Sarah for offending her. There is no parallel to this prayer in the biblical text, where Hagar does not appear to pray first before running off.[109] The second occasion is here, in Amram's prayer. He is worried because his wife is pregnant and Pharaoh has ordered all Hebrew boys to be killed. He therefore asks God to take pity on those "who did not overstep the religious worship of him", and to grant them deliverance. The third, in book five of *Antiquitates*, is when the Israelites ask the prophetess Deborah to pray to God to have pity on them, because they are afraid to be destroyed by the Canaanites.[110] In Moses' prayer outside the tent of Datham, the word and the topic occur as well, not as a request for pity, but to recall that God had taken pity on the misery of the Hebrews in the past.[111] It is obvious from this text that God can have pity and that he can also act accordingly. The only occasion on which the verbal form οἰκτίζειν ('to implore mercy') is used, is not in a prayer, but by one man to another: Shimei begging David for mercy.[112]

Josephus also makes his characters pray for pity using the verb ἐλεεῖν (three times) or ἔλεος (once). When the country is ravaged by famine,

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[108] See pp. 37–39.
[109] Hagar, AJ 1.188; Gen 16:6.
[110] Israelites through Deborah, AJ 5.200–201; the content of this prayer appears to have been invented by Josephus, for Judg 4:3 only says: "The Israelites cried to the Lord".
[111] AJ 4.40.
[112] AJ 7.265.

King David asks God to take pity on the people and reveal the reason for it.[113] Solomon, in his second prayer at the Temple, asks God to be merciful if people take refuge in the Temple because God himself has punished them for their sinfulness by destroying their harvest.[114] After he has been told about Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel thanks God for having taken pity on the youth,[115] and Esther asks God to take pity on her before she goes to the king to tell him about her Jewish descent.[116]

Prayers for mercy or pity are not uncommon in texts other than Josephus' writings. There is a Jewish example in 3 Maccabees 2:20, where, towards the end of his prayer, Simon the high priest asks, "Let your mercies speedily overtake us", and a pagan example in Catullus' *Carmen* 76.17–26, where he prays: "O gods, if it is in you to have pity, or if ever you brought help to men in death's very extremity, look on pitiful me".

2. *The loyalty of the people*

Amram uses the loyalty of the people to enlist God. He points out that they did not transgress in their religious worship. He points out that it would be unfair to make the people suffer the destruction of their nation. By stressing the faith of the people the prayer is made more compelling. Amram is presumably referring to the fact that the people did not follow the Egyptians in their idolatry, and now tells God that one good turn deserves another.[117]

Josephus uses the word θρησκεία, 'religious worship', to denote any kind of religious act. It differs from εὐσέβεια, 'piety', which refers more to a religious state of mind.[118] What Amram is saying is that the people always performed the rites and sacrifices they were supposed to, and were never tempted to do as the Egyptians did.

In the prayer of Mordecai, which will be discussed later, a similar point is made: he says that Haman wants to punish the Jewish people, "because we do not transgress your laws". Not to transgress God's

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[113] David concerning the famine, AJ 7.294.
[114] AJ 8.115.
[115] Daniel's thanksgiving, AJ 10.202.
[116] AJ 11.232.
[117] The prayer formula used here is based on the *da-quia-dedi* model ('give because I have given'), although *da-quia-dederunt* ('give because they have given') would be more accurate.
[118] Schlatter, *Wie*, 77.

laws and thus his will, is obviously an important issue for Josephus.[119] However, in Amram's day the laws had not yet been given to the people, which might be the reason why Josephus used the expression θρησκεία at this point.

V. Moses at the Burning Bush: AJ 2.275

> Moses, who was unable to disbelieve what the deity promised, after having seen and heard such proofs, prayed and begged him to experience that power in Egypt. And he besought him not to grudge him the knowledge of his own name, but now that he had been granted to hear and even see him, tell him the name, so that he, when sacrificing, could invoke him by name to be present at the sacred rites.

This prayer is one without an equivalent in Exodus; although there Moses is talking with God, the passage has not been presented as a prayer, as Josephus has done here. Josephus has also changed the order of the story.

The prayer belongs to the story in which Moses is ordered by God to go to Egypt and save the Jewish people. In both stories God speaks to Moses from a burning bush. In Exodus, Moses then asks God to reveal his name because he wants to be able to tell the Israelites who sent him, if they ask. God tells Moses his name and when Moses says: "but what if they do not believe me?", God gives Moses a number of signs: his staff changes into a serpent, his right hand turns white as snow and the water of the Nile turns into blood. The last excuse Moses gives against going is that he is not eloquent, but slow of speech and tongue; then God says his brother Aaron is on his way and will go with him to act as his spokesman.[120]

This is the story as it is in the Bible. Josephus, however, changes the order of events: after the burning bush, Moses does not immediately ask for God's name, but only does so at the end of the story. First Moses says that he believes in God's promises, but doubts that the people will; he thinks he will not have enough persuasive power; God says that he will take care of that and shows Moses the three signs, his staff, his right hand and the water. After that Moses says his prayer, in which he asks for two things: power and knowledge of God's name. God tells him his name, and Moses sets out for Egypt.

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[119] See pp. 32–33.
[120] Exod 3:1–4:17.

As we can see, why and when Moses asks God's name are different in the two texts. Instead of asking immediately after God's command to go to Egypt, in *Antiquitates* Moses first wants to make sure that the people will believe him (stressing that he himself certainly believes God). After the proofs God gives him to use if necessary, he first begs to experience that power in Egypt indeed, and then at last he asks for God's name. Moses' excuse that he is slow of speech is not recorded by Josephus, which is not unexpected. As we shall see in many of the following prayers, Josephus wants to depict Moses as a great leader, and a great leader is not someone who cannot speak well and who stutters. Hence also AJ 3.13, where Josephus writes about Moses, "But he (…) with that winning presence of his and that extraordinary influence in addressing a crowd, began to pacify their wrath".

Presumably Josephus wanted to emphasise the revelation of God's name; he places the question at the end, as the culmination of the story, and also gives some extra information in a personal comment: "Then God revealed to him his name, which ere then had not come to men's ears, and of which I am forbidden to speak".[121] Remarkably enough, Josephus does not record the name, which Exodus gives as "I am who I am", or "I am".[122] He just says that it is forbidden to say or write the name.

The reason that Josephus makes Moses ask for it in the form of a prayer (whereas in Exodus it is a direct, conversational question)[123] might be that, to Josephus, this is an exceptional request to make. He stresses this himself by saying that no-one had ever heard the name before, and by refusing to mention the actual name.

A. *The prayer*

1. *Power in Egypt*

Moses' first request is to be allowed to experience, in Egypt, the power that God has just shown him. In Exodus, Moses does not ask for this after God gave him the signs, but there Moses brings up the next subject, namely that he does not speak well. Josephus, however, left this topic

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[121] AJ 2.276.

[122] Exod 3:14.

[123] Other prayers which Josephus wrote which have a dialogue as parallel in the biblical text are Abraham, AJ 1.199 (Gen 18:23–32), Moses and Aaron, AJ 3.310 (Num 14), Balaam, AJ 4.105 (Num 22:9–11) and David at Sikella, AJ 7.7 (2 Sam 2:1–2).

out,[124] and in *Antiquitates* Moses instead asks to experience the power in Egypt, which indicates that he accepts the assignment.

Just before the prayer God shows Moses several signs: first he makes Moses cast his staff on the ground, and it turns into a serpent and back into a staff again; then he tells him to put his right hand into his bosom and the hand turns chalk white, and finally he orders him to pour out some water over the ground and this turns into blood. God tells Moses to have faith in him and to use these miracles to convince the people that he has been sent by God and that everything he does is by the order of God. Then Moses shows that he is willing to go and asks God to let him experience the power that he will need, in Egypt.

Later in the story Moses does indeed experience this power. First when he is speaking to the leaders of the Hebrews, he convinces them by showing them the miracles, and they believe him.[125] And later, when he is at court asking Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go and Pharaoh refuses the request and only shows contempt for Moses, then again Moses uses the power and performs the miracles. However, Pharaoh is not impressed and tells his priests to do likewise, which they do. Moses thereupon gets angry and says: "I will show that it is (…) from God's providence and power that my miracles proceed".[126] He uses the word δύναμις, the same word as in the prayer. Then he turns his staff into a snake and makes it eat all the priests' staffs. The king still does not want to let them go and makes the Hebrews labour even harder. Moses warns Pharaoh of the wrath of God, which does not help either.[127] Then finally God sends the ten plagues to the Egyptians, as a result of which the Hebrews are allowed to leave the country.

As we see, Moses got what he asked for: he asked God to allow him to use the power of the miracles and God granted his request; more, he sent the plagues over the Egyptians. His request to experience the power indicated that Moses accepted the mission to go to Egypt and free the Hebrews.

2. *Asking for God's name*

The second thing Moses asks God in this prayer is to reveal his name. As we have already said in the introduction, Moses also asks for God's

[124] See the introduction to the discussion of this prayer.
[125] AJ 2.280.
[126] AJ 2.286.
[127] AJ 2.281–292.

name in the biblical text; there, however, the request is not in the form of a prayer, but of a dialogue between Moses and God. Furthermore, in Exodus, Moses asks at a different moment and gives a different reason for wanting to know: in Exodus he asks it for the people, in *Antiquitates* he does so for himself, to use at the time of sacrifice.

The use of God's name during the sacrifice does not derive from the biblical text at this point. In Exodus God answers Moses saying, "This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be mentioned from generation to generation".[128] 'The name by which I am to be mentioned' is only one word in Hebrew, namely זִכְרִי. This could mean pronouncing as is done in liturgies, which may then be understood as a kind of invocation; this is how Josephus' Moses says he wants to use it. However, in the Septuagint the word is translated as μνημόσυνον, which means 'remembrance' or 'memorial'. This is in accordance with the verb זִכְרִי which is derived from זכר, meaning 'remember' or 'call to mind'. It is also possible that Josephus made Moses say this not because of some allusion in the biblical text, but because to him it was logical that the name of God be invoked while the sacrifice was being performed. This, however, is unlikely since the name of God may not, as Josephus says himself, be spoken out loud. He may have written this because in the Graeco-Roman religion it was normal to say the gods' names when sacrificing. Perhaps the Jews in his day *did* pronounce God's name, or perhaps priests were allowed to do so. Which explanation is the most likely is not clear. It is obvious that this passage needs further study, especially since Josephus refused to spell out the name here, but for now it falls outside our scope.[129]

3. *Not begrudging knowledge*

Another remarkable aspect of Moses' prayer is that it does not just ask God to reveal his name, but goes so far as to say "do not *begrudge* me the knowledge of your name" [emphasis added]. The idea that one should not 'begrudge' (φθονήσαι) other people knowledge one possesses, is something that occurs in gnostic thought. For example, Clement of Alexandria writes that a true gnostic may not withhold information from others out of φθόνος ('envy') because the gnostic is

[128] Exod 3:15.

[129] For a detailed discussion of this topic, I refer to Fossum, *Name*.

a follower of God, and φθόνος does not belong to God.[130] Another example is to be found in the Pseudo-Clementines. In the fifth *Homily* there is a story about a certain Apion who is cured of a broken heart by an Egyptian magician who gives him secret knowledge that can be used to enchant the person he loves. At the end of the story it is said that Apion possessed this secret knowledge because the teacher did not begrudge him it.[131]

A work in which God's freedom from envy is frequently mentioned is the *Odes of Solomon*. This work was probably written at the end of the first century CE or the start of the second.[132] Although its provenance is not Rome or Palestine, and although it is a Christian work, it is contemporary with Josephus and therefore offers an interesting parallel to his conception of ἀφθονία ('freedom from envy'). Particularly interesting in this respect is *Ode* 7:3, which says: "For there is a helper for me, the Lord. He has shown himself to me without jealousy, in his simplicity, because his kindness has diminished his grandeur". Elsewhere this ode also speaks of divine knowledge which is not begrudged to a human being, in much the same terms Moses asks for knowledge in his prayer.[133]

Most of the sources in which reference is made to God's freedom from envy are quite late. An earlier and Jewish text is Wisdom of Solomon. In 7:13 it says: "I have studied guileless, and I give a share of it without envy (ἀφθονώς); I do not hide its richness, because it [wisdom] is an unfailing treasure for the people". This is the only time the idea of not begrudging knowledge is expressed in the Septuagint. However, at the end of chapter 24 of his work, Jesus Sirach writes about his desire to share his wisdom with everyone, saying: "I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and I will make it clear from far away. I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations. Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek wisdom".[134] Sirach is talking about not begrudging wisdom, rather than knowledge, but the idea is very similar.

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[130] Van Unnik ''ΑΦΘΟΝΩΣ', 53; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 5.30.
[131] Van Unnik ''ΑΦΘΟΝΩΣ', 56; Pseudo-Clement, *Homiliae* 5.3.4.
[132] Charlesworth, 'Odes of Solomon', 726–727.
[133] Further examples of freedom from envy in the *Odes of Solomon* and elsewhere can be found in Van Unnik, 'ἀφθονία'.
[134] Sir 24:32–34.

Besides his account of Moses, there are several other passages in Josephus' works in which the idea of not begrudging other people something important or valuable is expressed. One such passage occurs in *Antiquitates* where Josephus is describing the law. In 4.235 he says of the loose grapes leftover from the harvest: "Neither let the vintagers hinder such as they meet from eating of that which they are carrying to the wine-vats; for it were unjust to grudge the good things which by God's will have come into the world (…)". Josephus is not talking about knowledge here but about grapes—or rather, about 'the good things'. Comparing this text with the biblical sources we see that Josephus substantially adjusted their message. Leviticus 19:10 says: "Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien". And Deuteronomy 24:21 says: "Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow". The biblical texts are strictly about grapes; moreover, nothing at all is said about not begrudging people things. Turning the grapes into a metaphor for 'good things' which should not be begrudged anyone represents Josephus' interpretation of these texts.

Two other passages in which this idea is expressed are AJ 1.10–11 and CA 2.209, both of which talk about not withholding Jewish customs from others. The first passage comes at the beginning of *Antiquitates*, where Josephus discusses the translation of the Hebrew Bible. He says that Eleazar "did not grudge to grant the monarch [i.e. 'the second of the Ptolemies'] the enjoyment of a benefit, which he would certainly have refused had it not been our traditional custom to make nothing of what is good into a secret".[135] The second passage occurs in *Contra Apionem.* Writing about Moses' legislation concerning animals, Josephus comments: "It will be seen that he took the best of all possible measures at once to secure our own customs from corruption, and to throw them open ungrudgingly (μήτε φθονήσωμεν) to any who elect to share them".[136]

These passages seem very much in line with Moses' plea to God not to begrudge him the knowledge of his name. Although this request is very specific, Josephus expresses it in terminology that was widely used.

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[135] AJ 1.11.
[136] CA 2.209.

4. *Praying for the revelation of knowledge*

In praying to God to reveal his name, Moses is asking God to give him knowledge. Asking God in prayers to reveal knowledge or information occurs eight times in *Antiquitates*. Besides Moses' prayer, the other cases are as follows. Samuel twice asks God for information, first as to whom God will make king,[137] and later, somewhat more mundanely, as to the whereabouts of Saul, who is about to be anointed king.[138] Saul himself also asks God for knowledge. Preceding a fight against the Philistines he asks about the battle and what its course will be.[139]

King David also asks God for knowledge on two occasions: firstly, after his official mourning for Saul is completed, he asks God which town he will live in,[140] and secondly, when the country is struck by a major famine, he asks God to tell him the cause of this famine how and it can be ended.[141] King Ahab too asks for knowledge, namely as to whether he will be victorious if he marches against Adados.[142] Daniel, of course, asks God to enlighten him concerning the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar.[143] Finally, there is a pagan prayer: the emperor Tiberius asks the gods to give him a clue as to who will succeed him.[144]

It was common practice in the ancient world to pray for the revelation of knowledge. In line with this is the belief, shared by, for instance, gnosticism, apocalypticism and magic, that knowledge can be revealed, and that it can therefore be asked for.

VI. Moses at the Red Sea: AJ 2.335–337

> (334) (…) Then, when he reached the shore, Moses took his staff and made supplication to God and called him ally and helper, saying: (335) "You yourself know very well that it is not possible for us to escape from the present situation through human might or human thinking; but if there is any rescue at all for the army, which has left Egypt at your will, then it is your duty to provide it. 336 We, despairing of other hope and

[137] Samuel's daily prayer for the name of the future king, AJ 6.49.
[138] Samuel searching Saul, AJ 6.64.
[139] Saul at Gilboa, AJ 6.328.
[140] David at Sikella, AJ 7.7.
[141] David and the famine, AJ 7.294.
[142] Ahab, AJ 8.401.
[143] Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, AJ 10.199; see pp. 180–183.
[144] Tiberius, AJ 18.211.

> resource, we flee for refuge to these [hope and resource] coming from you alone. And if anything comes forth from your providence, which may rescue us from the wrath of the Egyptians, then we look to you. And may it come quickly; manifest to us your power and help this people, which is sunk into a deep state of hopelessness, to be raised up to cheerfulness and confidence of salvation. (337) For we are not in impassable places belonging to another, but the sea is yours, and the mountain that encloses us is yours, so that, if you order it, it may be opened and the sea be made into firm land, and it may even be possible for us to escape through the air, if it suits your power to save us in this way".

Having led the Isrealites out of Egypt, Moses says this prayer at the edge of the Red Sea, which now blocks the way forward. With the Egyptian army advancing towards them, the Israelites seem to have no possibility of escape. The biblical source passage has no prayer at this point, only an address by Moses to the people;[145] God, however, responds to this address with the words "Why are you crying out to me?" Possibly it was God's reaction here that led Josephus to introduce Moses' prayer into his account. (The author of Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* seems to have had the same thought, since he too inserted a prayer at this point in the story, albeit one less pregnant with meaning than the prayer Josephus penned.)[146]

It is interesting that Josephus presents Moses as having suggested the solution to the Israelites' predicament, whereas in Exodus the solution is left to God. This is in keeping with Josephus' portrayal of Moses at the end of his account of him in *Antiquitates*: Moses is the wisest of all men, the most eloquent, free of passion, a wonderful general, and a prophet without equal.[147]

The prayer has a very simple structure: *we* are in mortal danger and only *you* can save us. There is no reference to God having given help to the Israelites on previous occasions or to anything having been promised in the past. The reason God ought to give help is that it was *his* will that the Israelites should escape Egypt, and now only he can do anything to save them—because the water and mountains belong to him, and only he has the power to act upon these things. That only God is able to help in this predicament is also a feature of Philo's

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[145] Exod 14:13–14.

[146] *L.A.B.* 10.4; in this prayer, Moses only asks God to remember that it was on his account that the people is here at the edge of the sea.

[147] AJ 4.327–331.

version of the story: "Do not lose heart; God's way of defence is not as that of men. Why are you quick to trust in the specious and plausible, and that only? When God gives help he needs no armament. It is his special property to find a way where no way is. What is impossible for all created being is possible to him only, ready to his hand".[148]

A. *The prayer*

1. *The invocation*

Josephus does not have Moses invoke God in the prayer itself, but before relating the prayer he indicates how Moses prepared to pray: "Moses took his staff and made supplication to God, and called Him ally and helper". The expression 'ally and helper' (σύμμαχος καὶ βοηθός) occurs only twice in Josephus' work in reference to God, on both occasions used by Moses.[149] Just before his death Moses uses the expression a third time, but on this occasion he is speaking of himself. He says he will *not* be an ally and helper in the upcoming strife, because he will be dead.[150] In addition, in his own speech in BJ 5, Josephus brings the two words into proximity again, albeit not in a single expression. He says: "And after all this do you expect him to be your ally (σύμμαχος)? Righteous suppliants are you, indeed, and pure the hands with which you appeal to your helper (βοηθός)!"[151]

In the Old Testament 'ally' (σύμμαχος) is nowhere used to express an attribute of God.[152] But there are Jewish texts that do use this term to characterise God. In 2 Maccabees, for example, God is called ally on several occasions. Judas' men beseech God to be their ally in 10:16, and Judas himself asks the same in 12:36.[153] Philo expresses this conception in *De migratione* 62: "If you go forth to war (…) you shall not be terrified so as to flee from them, for you, though only a single person, shall have a single being for your ally, because the Lord your God is on your side". Josephus himself uses the word quite frequently when referring to God.[154]

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[148] Philo, *De vita Mosis* 1.173–174.
[149] AJ 2.334; 3.302.
[150] AJ 4.177.
[151] BJ 5.403.
[152] Marcus, 'Divine', 110.
[153] See also 2 Macc 8:24; 11:10.
[154] E.g. AJ 4.2; 9.55; for more examples see Attridge, *Interpretation*, 79 n. 1.

God is characterised as 'helper' more commonly, and this does occur in the Old Testament.[155] We find it as well in the apocryphal books. In 2 Maccabees 3:39 the author says that God is a helper of the holy place, Jerusalem, while Sirach calls God helper twice in Jesus Sirach 51:2. Josephus himself uses βοηθός a total of 17 times, nine times with reference to God.[156]

As Attridge has argued, the expression 'ally and helper' might well represent a replacement of the doctrine of the covenant: Josephus avoided all talk of the covenant and seems to have wanted to replace this conception of the relationship between God and the people with the idea of God as ally and benefactor, so that help from God comes primarily in response to human need, rather than out of contractual obligation. In this way, God's help will not be reserved for only one people who have a special agreement with him, but will be applicable more universally.[157] If this is correct, this way of invoking God indicates that Moses is referring to the bond the people have with God, and it is this bond that enables him to ask God for help. In the section below, which concerns God's providence, we will look more closely into this issue.

2. *"Lord, help us"*

Moses wastes no time in opening his prayer with the statement that the people are powerless to rescue themselves from their present danger. There is no direction in which they can flee—in front of them is the Red Sea and behind them the approaching Egyptian army. Moses stresses that no man can solve this problem and that God surely knows this. He places the responsibility for rescuing the people with God, while reminding him that it was *his* will that the people should escape from Egypt.

In fact, the request for God to save the people runs through the whole prayer. Moses formulates the request in a variety of ways. "If there is any possibility of rescue for the army, then it is your duty to provide it (335). (…) We, despairing of other hope and resource, resort to those [hope and resource] coming from you (336). (…) We look at you (336) (…) manifest to us your power and help this people (336).

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[155] Hebrew words like עֶזֶר and עֹז are translated in the Septuagint as βοηθός. See for example Exod 15:2; 18:4; Ps 9:10.

[156] BJ 5.403; AJ 1.272; 2.172, 274, 331, 333, 334; 3.302; 4.182.

[157] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 79–82.

(…) if it appears well to your power to save us in this way (337)". By making Moses repeat the claim in this way, Josephus produces a sense of Moses' feeling of total dependence on God. This may seem in tension with the ending of the prayer, where it is Moses himself who comes up with the solution to the Israelites' predicament. Nonetheless, while it is Moses' idea that God should manipulate the elements, it is only God who can perform the miracle.

3. *God's providence*

One of God's attributes Moses makes reference to when asking for his help is God's 'providence', πρόνοια. The word does not derive from a Jewish origin: in the Septuagint it occurs only in the books that were originally written in Greek.[158] The concept of providence became quite important in Hellenistic Judaism. Philo, for example, wrote a work called *De providentia*, of which unfortunately only two fragments survive. As we shall see, Josephus speaks of providence frequently.

According to *Liddell and Scott* πρόνοια has several shades of meaning, which are arranged by Rengstorf in his *Concordance* thus: 'divine providence', 'care', 'forethought'.[159]

The concept of πρόνοια (*pronoia*) occupies a major place in Hellenistic philosophical thought. Here it represents the idea of a cosmic order and design, and the gracious intervention of the divine into the world of humans. Except for the Epicureans, the Academic Sceptics, and Aristotle, most ancient philosophers held some form of doctrine of divine providence.[160] Plato was the first to write about God's moral government, and was thus "'a significant starting point for later theologians' [who anticipated] the Stoic belief in providential gods".[161]

Divine providence became one of the central doctrines in Stoic philosophy. An example of an Early Stoic text is Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, in which Cleanthes writes: "Nothing supervenes, Lord, on earth, in the divine vault of heaven or the sea, without you".[162] The concept is also one of the main concerns of Cicero's *De natura deorum*.[163] Cicero

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[158] Wis 14:3; 17:2; Add Dan 6:19; 2 Macc 4.6; 3 Macc 4:21; 5:30; 4 Macc 9:24; 13:19; 17:22.

[159] Rengstorf, *Complete*, vol. 3, 538.

[160] Dragona-Monachou, 'Divine', 4418.

[161] Dragona-Monachou, 'Divine', 4419, quoting, J. Rexine, *Religion in Plato and Cicero*, New York 1959, p. 24.

[162] Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus, SVF* 1.537.15–16.

[163] See Dragona-Monachou, 'Divine', 4425–4430, for an extensive discussion of providence in this work.

identifies providence with the World Soul, considered as an aspect of God. He writes: "the world and all its parts were set in order from the beginning and have been governed ever since by divine providence".[164] In this way, providence was in fact an equivalent of both Zeus and Logos.[165] The concept persisted through five centuries of Stoicism without significant alteration.[166] Later, however, the word πρόνοια itself lost some of its philosophical significance, and came into more general use, even becoming part of the popular vocabulary.[167]

The concept of πρόνοια appears to be central to Josephus' thinking. Many of the main personages in *Antiquitates* make reference to it, as does Moses in his prayer at the Red Sea and in the address that precedes it.[168] Although Josephus often uses the word, it occurs in only three prayers: Moses' prayers at the Red Sea and outside Datham's tent, and David's thanksgiving hymn.[169] In addition, in Mordecai's prayer and in the prayer the multitude says following this, the verb προνοεῖν is used in the same way.[170] Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent is a very typical example of πρόνοια as it occurs in Josephus: Moses prays to God, asking him to attest to the fact that he (Moses) appointed Aaron high priest because this was God's will, and that he did not do it out of his own volition. He says to God: "And prove now that everything is directed by your providence, and that nothing happens spontaneously but that everything, controlled by your will, comes to an end".[171] After this prayer Josephus adds: "For those people, though convinced at length that nothing befell without God's providence, yet refused to believe that his favour for Moses had played no part in what had happened".[172] In David's thanksgiving hymn πρόνοια has a more concrete meaning, referring specifically to the care showed to the Hebrews by God in giving them their freedom.[173]

There are many other instances of the concept of providence in Josephus. As was said earlier, Attridge combines the idea that God

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[164] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.75; Dragona-Monachou, 'Divine', 4427.
[165] Gordon, 'Pronoia', 664.
[166] Dragona-Monachou, 'Divine', 4418.
[167] Kraabel, 'Pronoia', 80–82.
[168] AJ 2.330.
[169] Moses outside Datham's tent, AJ 4.40–50; David's thanksgiving hymn, AJ 7.95.
[170] Mordecai, AJ 11.229–230; The people supporting Esther AJ 11.231.
[171] AJ 4.47.
[172] AJ 4.60.
[173] See the discussion of David's thanksgiving hymn, p. 144.

exercises 'providential care' with a theology of 'God as ally and helper'. According to Attridge, Josephus adopted this theology in place of the theology of the covenant in order to make the bond between God and humankind more inclusive, that is, not confined to the Jewish people only, and less of a special pact between God and a particular people. Of course there is still a special bond between God and the Jewish people in Josephus; but it is not based on a covenant, but on the merits of its leaders. God rewards the good and punishes those who have done wrong; Israel's leaders have acted righteously and the Jews therefore have a special relationship with God. Because of this special bond, God looks after the people. Attridge says: "The affirmation that God exercises providential care for the world is equivalent to saying that he effects proper retribution for good and evil within history. The belief in a special providence for Israel is subordinated to that general principle and is seen to be a particular instance of it".[174] God's providence shows itself, for instance, in his power to cause great changes in the lives of people or in their actions: "God's power is revealed and made manifest in miraculous interventions in human affairs".[175] People must have confidence in God because of the knowledge they have that he has taken care of them in the past.[176] Attridge highlights several examples of this in Josephus, one of which occurs at the point in the exodus story when the Israelites have reached the edge of the Red Sea. Moses says at the start of his address to the people (preceding the prayer): "but to despair at this moment of the providence of God were an act of madness, seeing that from him there has come to you everything that he promised to perform (…) though far beyond your expectations".[177]

Finally Attridge remarks that the kind of providence in AJ 1–4 differs from that in AJ 5–10: in the first four books it manifests itself as *mirabilia dei*, wondrous deeds of God; in books 5–10 it is to a much greater degree manifested in prophecy.[178]

For the purpose of this study it is important to note that Josephus derived his notion of providence from his intellectual surroundings, not from the Bible.

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[174] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 86–87.
[175] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 93.
[176] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 71–107.
[177] AJ 2.330.
[178] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 99.

4. *The solution*

As was remarked in the introduction, Moses suggests the solution to the predicament himself, saying: "the sea is yours and the mountain is yours, so that, if you order it so, it may be opened and the sea can be made into dry land". He also suggests that, alternatively, it might be possible to escape through the air, making a total of three proposed solutions.

Triplets are a common stylistic device in Josephus' writing.[179] Some instances in which Josephus uses this device are: when giving reasons for things (for example, in AJ 1.106 Josephus gives three reasons for giving a comprehensive narrative of the plagues that befell Egypt: first, because such had happened to no nation before, secondly, to show that Moses was right in his predictions, and thirdly because mankind can learn from it); three parties (e.g. in both AJ 3.96 and 4.36 there are three parties with different opinions about where Moses is or what should happen to him); or three options (as in the prayer considered here).[180] There are further examples in prayers. For one, there is Isaac's blessing, in which Isaac asks God to grant three gifts to his son. Also, in his thanksgiving hymn David thanks God for three things, and in the prayer David says for Solomon at the end of his reign the invocation is described as consisting of three parts.[181] This figure of speech is called *tricolon* and it is a rhetorical feature that also occurs in Latin prose and verse.[182]

In the biblical version of the story, Moses does not suggest any solution, he merely says to the people, "Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today", whereupon God answers by telling Moses to raise his hand and staff and the sea will be divided.[183] However, in *Antiquitates*, God does not answer Moses' prayer, but Moses, acting on his own initiative, strikes the sea with his staff, and it at once retreats, leaving dry ground before him.[184]

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[179] Thackeray ascribes this phenomenon to a so-called 'sophoclean assistant' ('Introduction', xv–xvi).

[180] Thackeray, 'Introduction', p. xvi.

[181] Isaac's blessing, AJ 1.272–273; David's thanksgiving hymn, AJ 7.95; David's prayer for Solomon, AJ 7.380–381.

[182] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 145. This figure of speech should not be confused with the same word which is used as a technical term in discussing Hebrew poetry, where it refers to a verse consisting of three parts.

[183] Exod 14:13–16.

[184] AJ 2.338.

This is in line with the important role Josephus gives to Moses. Moses, the lawgiver, is a central figure in Josephus' thought and a large part of *Contra Apionem* is dedicated to Moses and his importance for Jewish and world history.[185]

VII. Moses at Rephidim: AJ 3.34

> Avoiding for a while the assault of the crowd, he turned in prayer to God,[186] beseeching him, as he gave food to those in need, to give drink in the same way, because gratitude for food would perish if there were no drink.

The story takes place in the desert, where the Hebrew people are wandering after their escape from Egypt. After a few months they are running out of food and they are starting to grumble against Moses. In broad outline, the stories in *Antiquitates* and Exodus are alike; however, when we look at the details there are some significant differences.

In the account in Exodus, the people start to grumble and to say they wish they had never left Egypt. God promises to send meat every day in the evening and bread in the morning. Then birds come in the evening and in the morning the people find a dew-like substance they call *manna*. Moses tells them to collect as much as they need, but only for the day at hand. On the sixth day only can they collect enough for two days, because the seventh day is the day of rest. When they arrive in Rephidim the people are thirsty and again start to complain to Moses. Moses calls out to God: "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me".[187] God tells him to take his stick and strike the rock and water will flow, which Moses does in the presence of the Elders.

In *Antiquitates*, however, this last prayer of Moses is the fourth in a sequence of which only the first has a biblical parallel. The first prayer is said when the people are thirsty and there is no water to drink because the water in the spring is bitter. Moses beseeches God

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[185] CA 2.145–185.

[186] Josephus uses the word λιτή here; this is the only place where he does so. The verb λισσόμαι is nowhere used by Josephus. It is not clear whether he avoids the word on purpose and if he uses it here to express something particular. For more information on the use of the words λιτή and λισσόμαι, see Aubriot-Sévin, *Prière*, Chapter 5 and Pulleyn, 56–69.

[187] Exod 17:4; this is where Josephus introduces the prayer of AJ 3.34.

to change the dirty, bitter water into drinkable water. God hears the prayer and Moses makes the water drinkable by throwing wood into the spring.[188] This prayer is found in Exodus.[189] The second prayer is said later, when they are already in Elis. The people start to complain because they are hungry and they become very angry with Moses. Moses, however, reacts calmly and understandingly. He makes a long speech (as Josephus memorably says: "with that winning presence of his and that extraordinary influence in addressing a crowd"),[190] saying that they must not forget all the good things God has given them and that they should put their trust in him. He then climbs to a higher spot and prays to God, whereupon God promises to help.[191] A flock of quails comes, and the people have food. Moses gives thanks to God for keeping his word and sending food.[192] Immediately thereafter, he raises his hands to heaven,[193] and they are covered with a dew-like substance. Moses tells the people they can consume it, and this they do. They call this substance *manna*. There follows an allusion to the order that each may collect what he needs but only for the day at hand. However, about the day of rest nothing is said.

When they get to Rephidim, the people are thirsty and again grow angry with Moses. At this point Moses says the fourth prayer, which corresponds to Exodus 17:4. In answer to this prayer God tells Moses to strike the rock with his stick. In the meantime the people are very anxious and curious as to what Moses will do, and when Moses conjures water out of the rock they are in awe. They sacrifice to God and express great admiration for Moses.

The most remarkable difference between the biblical version of the story and Josephus' is of course the depiction of Moses. In *Antiquitates* Moses is a great leader who overcomes all problems, and the help he receives from God in Exodus is played down in Josephus' telling of the story. The depiction of the people also differs. In *Antiquitates* their

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[188] Moses at Marah, AJ 3.6.
[189] Exod 15:25.
[190] AJ 3.13, see also the discussion of Moses' prayer at the burning bush, p. 86.
[191] Moses at Elis, AJ 3.23.
[192] Moses thanking for food, AJ 3.25.
[193] AJ 3.26; it is hard to tell whether this is part of the prayer mentioned in 3.25 or whether it is another prayer; in any case the substance appears on Moses' raised hands while he is praying, which differs from Exodus 16:13, where it appears lying in the desert around the camp the next morning.

dissatisfaction is very much directed at Moses, whereas in Exodus their grumblings are much less focused.

A. *The prayer*

1. *The differences*

The first difference between the two versions, namely the reason given for Moses' prayer, provides the explanation for other differences. Josephus makes Moses pray for the people because they are thirsty. In Exodus Moses prays for himself because he is afraid that the people will stone him to death. Some observations are in order here. The most important is that Josephus again portrays Moses as a great leader—once again Moses is a man who knows what to do in a difficult situation (which is not how he comes across in Exodus).[194]

Another point to observe is the connection with the remark Josephus makes in CA 2.196, when he says that one must first pray for the safety of all, and only after that for oneself. Starting from the assumption that in that passage Josephus wrote about prayer in accordance with his own convictions, it is not a strange idea that Josephus should now attribute to Moses a prayer that embodies the principles he believed to belong to piety. We saw Josephus doing this in the prayer of Amram, a person who plays an important role in the story of Moses. In both prayers the request made is perfectly understandable in the context, but the request made in Moses' prayer is all the more remarkable because it differs so obviously from the corresponding prayer in Exodus, in which Moses very clearly prays for his own safety.[195]

Another striking element in the *Antiquitates* prayer is that Moses appears to warn God that the gratitude the people feel for having received food will disappear if they do not now get drink. Warning or threatening gods is a phenomenon that occurs often in ancient religion. Heiler cites an old Egyptian prayer in which the gods are threatened that if they do not reunite the dead with their family then flesh will be stolen from the altars and bread will no longer be sacrificed.[196]

In all of Josephus' work this is the only prayer that contains a warning to God. The only other case that comes close is the prayer of Joshua,

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[194] See also Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, AJ 2.335–337.

[195] The subject of praying for the sake of someone else first, will be treated more thoroughly in Chapter 5.

[196] Heiler, *Gebet*, 84–85; see also Versnel, 'Religious', 40.

but here Josephus omits the offensive part of the biblical prayer: in the Book of Joshua, Joshua seems to reproach God and to warn him that if the people lose the battle he will have no one left to honour him. Rather than have Joshua too warn God, in his version Josephus downgraded Joshua's warning to a plea.[197]

2. *Thirst and hunger*

As we have seen, in this passage Moses prays to God four times on account of thirst or hunger among the people. Besides these four prayers there are three more instances in Josephus' works of prayers for food or drink. The first is the prayer of the Israelites in AJ 5.212. This prayer is prompted by the attacks of the Madianites, whose attacks destroyed the Israelites' entire harvest each winter: "So there was famine and dearth of sustenance, and they turned in supplication to God, implor-ing him to save them".

A few chapters later, Samson is tormented by thirst and realises that "human valour is a thing of naught" and that all things are attributable to God. He prays God for help, and God grants him sweet water.[198]

The third instance is to be found in BJ 4. Here Josephus tells the story of a spring near Jericho, of which it was said that it used to bring disease and destruction, until one day Elisha came to visit the area. Elisha was so grateful for the hospitality of the people that he made a sacrifice, pouring propitiatory libations and asking the earth for sweeter water.[199]

VIII. The People at Mount Sinai: AJ 3.78

> And they were celebrating while they were waiting for their leader, by practising purity in general and especially by abstaining from intercourse with the women for three days, like he had told them to do; and they called upon God to be gracious in his meeting with Moses and to give him the gift, by which they would live well.

The biblical account has no parallel to this prayer. The context in which it occurs, however, is similar, although in his version Josephus simplified things considerably. In *Antiquitates* the story goes as follows.[200]

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[197] Josh 7:7–8; AJ 5.39–41, see pp. 120–123.
[198] Samson, AJ 5.302.
[199] Elisha transforms the water from a spring, BJ 4.462–464, pp. 213–216.
[200] AJ 3.63–93.

While Moses and the people are still on their way from Egypt to the promised land, Moses' father-in-law Raguel[201] comes to visit them and sees how preoccupied Moses is with administering justice. He advises Moses to organise the people so that he can leave the administration of justice to others. In this way he will be able to direct himself to the service of God and consequently be gracious to the people.

Moses follows this advice, and then calls the people together to tell them he will go up Mount Sinai. He orders the people to move the camp nearer to the mountain, then departs. His speech to the people is entirely absent from the Exodus version,[202] as is the people's reaction to it, which is that they become excited and, as instructed, move the camp nearer to the mountain. They then celebrate for three days and say the prayer asking God to give Moses the gift.

On the third day a dark cloud appears and there is much thunder and lightning on the mountaintop. The people fear that Moses will not have survived, but eventually he comes down from the mountain and speaks to them. God himself relates the ten words to them (and other things, of which Josephus says he will write later).[203] Rejoicing at this, the crowd disperses.

In Josephus' account Moses ascends the mountain once only, whereas in Exodus he goes up and down three times. Clearly Josephus found this excessively complicated, and unnecessary for conveying his key message, namely that God gave Moses the law. Another difference is the movement of the people. In Exodus, only after they have been given directions by Jethro (Raguel) do they move into the Sinai desert, whereas in *Antiquitates* they are already there when the story begins. Moreover, the time when the people approach the mountain has also been changed, presumably because Josephus has simplified the story. Other differences between Exodus and *Antiquitates* are the celebrating the people do and the remark that the cloud was unlike any before seen, both additions by Josephus. On the other hand, God's warning that the people must not come too near to the mountain and must not try to touch it is omitted by Josephus.

The most striking difference, however, is the active role given to the people. In Josephus' telling they celebrate and purify themselves on their

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[201] At this point in Exodus 18:1–12, his name is Jethro; his name is Re'uel when Moses first meets him in Exodus 2:18.

[202] Exod 19:3.

[203] Josephus says it is forbidden to write the actual words explicitly, so he only indicates their purport (AJ 3.90).

own initiative, without being commanded to do so by God,[204] although Josephus does say "like he [probably Moses] preferred them to do". Moreover, they even pray to God on Moses' behalf.

A. *The prayer*

1. *The question*

The most important aspect of this prayer is the fact that the people *ask* to be given the law and the ten commandments. This does not occur in the biblical text at all. They say they need this gift to live well. No other ancient Jewish author (to my knowledge) presents the people as having asked to be given the law, and even Josephus does not mention anything like it in *Contra Apionem* when he is describing how and why Moses gave the law to the people.[205]

With this prayer Josephus wants to emphasise the great desire the Jewish people have to have a law and to keep it. According to Josephus it was not simply bestowed upon the Jews, rather they asked to be given it. Although he does not mention this in *Contra Apionem*, Josephus does stress there how important the law is for every Jew, and how determined the Jews are to live by it. In 2.178 he underlines how well every Jew knows the law: "Should anyone of our nation be questioned about the laws, he would repeat them all more readily than his own name", and "we have them [i.e. the laws], as it were, engraven on our souls". In 2.183 he writes that no Jew acts against the law: "To us, the only wisdom, the only virtue, consists in refraining absolutely from every action, from every thought that is contrary to the laws originally laid down". And finally in 2.219 he reminds his readers of the noble acts of men who were ready to suffer for their law: "I should have hesitated to write thus, had not the facts made all men aware that many of our countrymen have on many occasions ere now preferred to brave all manner of suffering rather than to utter a single word against the law". It is evident how important the law was to the Jewish people in Josephus' view, and it fits in very well with his outlook that he shows the people asking for the law, rather than simply having it given to them.

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[204] This is done in Exodus 19:10.
[205] CA 2.159.

IX. Moses and Aaron: AJ 3.310

> And saying these things they [i.e. Joshua and Caleb] attempted to appease the anger of the multitude; and Moses and Aaron fell on the earth and beseeched God not for their own safety, but in order that he liberate the crowd from their ignorance and calm down their mind, that was troubled by the helplessness of their present misfortune.

When the people arrive at the border of Canaan, the 'promised land', Moses comes to the assessment that it will take some fighting before they can enter the country, and he therefore proposes to send some spies ahead to investigate the power of the Canaanites and the fertility of the land. The people praise Moses for this idea and twelve men are sent. The mission takes forty days. When the spies return they describe how fertile the land is and how strong the Canaanites are. The Canaanites will be a more formidable foe than any the Israelites have yet faced. When the people hear this news they become very angry and threaten to stone Moses and Aaron, and to return to Egypt. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, try to calm them down, telling them not to be angry with Moses and Aaron because they have worked hard for them and brought them to prosperity, and that God is on their side. In the meantime Moses and Aaron fall on their knees and pray to God. Following this, Moses is emboldened to tell the people that God was angry with them and wanted to punish them. The people then attempt to persuade Moses to talk to God on their behalf, but he tells them that it will be of no use.[206] After this passage Josephus takes time to elaborate on the greatness of Moses' personality and authority.[207]

Although Josephus made some changes to the sequence of events in the story, the context of the prayer in Numbers is essentially the same.[208] As in *Antiquitates* the people react badly to the information brought back by the spies. However, in Numbers they are not so much angry as disappointed by the apparently unsuccessful end this news brings to their journey. In response to this Moses and Aaron "fall on their faces before all the assembly".[209] It is not explicitly said that they pray, and no words are spoken. It is therefore possible that in Numbers this gesture

[206] AJ 3.300–316.
[207] AJ 3.317–322.
[208] Num 13 and 14.
[209] Num 14:5.

is not meant as a prayer, but rather as a supplication to the people. Nonetheless I think Josephus took them to be praying, which is very likely given the expression 'fall on their faces'. This may explain why Josephus inserted a prayer here. While Moses and Aaron are doing this, Joshua and Caleb address the people. They do not, however, as they do in *Antiquitates*, try to make them listen to their leaders, but rather tell them not to stand against God, and that eventually he will give them the wonderful land they have been promised. After this appeal the people become angry and threaten to stone Moses and Aaron, which seems odd, and most likely Josephus thought so too. It may be for this reason that he altered the sequence of events, placing the threat of stoning before Moses and Aaron's appeal to God. The threat of stoning becomes the reason Moses and Aaron pray (though not for themselves), and it is now Joshua and Caleb who talk to the people. Another consequence of the changes made by Josephus is that Moses (in this case also Aaron) appears nobler than in the biblical version. Moses is once again seen to keep a cool head and to react calmly to an angry crowd, finding within himself the nobility to pray for their safety rather than for his own.

In the biblical version, after the threat of the people and the appeal of Joshua and Caleb, God comes to Moses and speaks with him. God says he will destroy the people but Moses pleas for them. God relents somewhat and says he will only punish them to the extent of forcing them to stay in the desert for forty more years.[210] In *Antiquitates*, however, God at no time wants to destroy the people, only to punish them with forty years in the desert. Josephus moreover says "he would not consign all to destruction nor exterminate their race, which he esteemed above all mankind, he would yet not suffer them to occupy the land of Canaan".[211] It is obvious that Josephus made this change because to be depicted as a people who came near to being destroyed by their own God would have cast the Jews in a very unfavourable light. This motivation explains why he goes so far as to say: "which he esteemed above all mankind".

Josephus' story again gives a more active and self-assured role to Moses than the biblical original. Moses solves the problem of the angry crowd on his own, by talking to them directly, instead of merely

[210] Num 14:11–35.
[211] AJ 3.313.

relaying God's words and threats to them. His pro-active style is also evident at the beginning of the episode. In Numbers, the spies are sent because God tells Moses to send them, in *Antiquitates* he sends them on his own initiative.

The fact that Moses, even at this awkward moment, prays not for himself but for the safety of the people[212] also shows his greatness. This is further stressed by the abundant praise he receives from Josephus at the end of the story. These considerations strongly support the view that Josephus above all wanted to portray Moses as a great man.

A. *The prayer*

1. *Praying for the safety of others*

The most interesting thing about this prayer is that Moses and Aaron do not pray for their own safety (σωτηρία). This is in accord with *Contra Apionem* 2.196, where Josephus writes "And during the sacrifices, first one must pray for common safety, and after that for oneself, because we are born for the community". We have already looked at some other passages in which the protagonist prayed for other people.[213] But this is the only place in which the word 'safety' is explicitly used in combination with the expression 'not for one's own'. There are only two other prayers in which the safety of other people is prayed for. The first is the prayer of David, who prays for the cure (σωτηρία) of his sick son. The second is that of Antigonus, who prays for the cure of his sick brother.[214] However, these are both prayers for people who are very close to the person praying. They are not prayers for others in the sense Josephus intended when he said: 'we should pray for common safety'. The prayer of Moses and Aaron is the only one in which this precept is shown in action.

2. *The people's state of mind*

In this prayer, Moses and Aaron make several references to the people's state of mind: the people suffer from 'ignorance', their minds are troubled (τεταραγμένη), because they are helpless and confused. There are several possible explanations for this unflattering portrayal.

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[212] See the next section, as well as Chapter 5, pp. 245–248.
[213] The prayers by Amram and Moses at Rephidim, see pp. 82–83 and 101.
[214] David's prayer for his sick son, AJ 7.154 and Antigonus AJ, AJ 13.304.

The people wanted to stone Moses and Aaron, and this is of course a very grave wrong in the eyes of Josephus, who admires Moses greatly. But Josephus also seems resolute in wanting to depict the people in a positive light (as we saw in the passage a few sections later, in which he says that God esteemed them above all mankind). Josephus therefore has to provide a special explanation for their bad behaviour on this occasion, and he does this by making Moses and Aaron acknowledge that they did not know what they were doing. This is a wholly different approach on the part of Josephus from the one he took with Moses' prayer at Rephidim, where Moses is also threatened with stoning. There Moses turned to God and asked him to help the people without making reference to their state of mind. There is consistency, however, in so far as Moses does not blame the people for threatening him and he is not afraid of them. Here again the nobility of Moses is underlined.

X. Moses outside Datham's Tent: AJ 4.40–50

(40) And he, coming closer and raising his hands to heaven, called out loud-sounding, so that he was audible to the whole crowd: "Master of all that is in heaven and earth and sea; [because] *you* are for me the most important witness of the things done by me, [a witness of] how everything happened according to your will and [how] you contrived a means with the actions having pity on all the misery of the Hebrews; come to me as a hearer of all those words, (41) for neither what is done, nor what is thought is hidden from you, so that you will not grudge me the truth by putting their ingratitude at the top. So you yourself know the things that happened before my birth [lit. the things that are older than my birth] the most exact, not because you learned about them by ear, but by the eye: because you were present with them when they happened; but the events after that, which they unjustly suspect, although they know them, be my witness of them. (42) While I had secured for myself a life free from business by my bravery and your will, this [life] that my father-in-law Raguel left me, I devoted myself to hard work on behalf of them, while abandoning the enjoyment of those good things. First I undertook the greatest efforts on behalf of their freedom, and now on behalf of their safety, opposing my enthusiasm to all danger.

(43) So now, if I am suspected to do wrong by the people (who owe it to my toil that they are still living) then probably you yourself [are suspected to do wrong as well]; you who showed to me that fire at the Sinai and who made me a hearer of your own voice and who made me a spectator of all the miracles which that place showed me; and you who ordered me to take out for Egypt and reveal your will to them; (44) you who had the prosperity of the Egyptians shake and granted us escape from their slavery and made the supremacy of the Pharaoh smaller than

mine; you who made for us, being ignorant of the road, sea into land and made the sea, that was beaten back, flow in waves to the destruction of the Egyptians; you who gave those unarmed [lit. naked] safety through weapons; (45) you who made polluted springs flow for us as drinkable and who for us, being completely at a loss, found means to make drinking water come from the rocks; you who saved us, lacking things from the earth as food, with those from the sea; and you who sent food from heaven, as never happened before; you who put into our minds notion of laws and an ordered constitution; (46) come master of all, as my judge and incorruptible witness, that I have not accepted a gift from any Hebrew against justice, and that I have not condemned the poor that had the possibility to win, in favour of the rich;[215] nor that I have acted to the damage of the public weal and have come to thoughts so wholly alien to my customs, as giving the priesthood to Aaron not because you ordered so but because of my favouritism. (47) And prove now that everything is directed by your providence,[216] and that nothing happens spontaneously but that everything, controlled by your will, comes to an end; [prove] that you care for those who will benefit the Hebrews, while punishing Abiram and Datham, who accuse you of insensibility as if you are conquered by my trick.

(48) And you will make your judgement upon them, because they rage against your honour, by removing them in no common manner out of existence, and not making it seem that they quit life according to human law when they die, but may the earth on which they walk gape for them together with their family and their belongings. (49) May this be for all a demonstration of your power and a lesson in sobriety through the fear of suffering the same, when they make imaginations concerning you, that are not hallowed, because then I would appear to be a good servant of the things that you order.

(50) But if they have expressed true accusations against me, then may you keep them free from all harm, and may you make the destruction I have imprecated upon them into mine. And when you have exacted justice from those who want to do wrong to your people, and have arbitrated on harmony and peace, then save the multitude that follows your commands by guarding that it is without suffering and that it has no part in the punishment of those who have sinned. For you know that it is not just to make all Israelites pay penalty together because of the badness of the others.

Although this prayer is parallelled by a short prayer in the biblical text,[217] it is best thought of as a new prayer put together out of various

[215] This is an example of *abstractum pro concreto*; literally the Greek text says 'poverty' and 'wealth'.

[216] For a discussion of this term I refer to the treatment of the subject in the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.

[217] Num 16:22.

elements in the biblical story. In fact, Josephus wholly changes the order of events of the story in which the prayer is embedded.

The order of events in the biblical version is as follows. Kores,[218] a prominent person among the Hebrews, accuses Moses of setting himself above the community, while in Kores' view every person is holy. Moses thereupon proposes that everyone who wants to can come and burn incense the next day, so that God will be able "to show who belongs to him and who is holy".[219] After this proposal he sends for Abiram and Datham. However, they refuse to come. At this point Moses becomes very angry and says a brief prayer: "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them".[220]

The next day, preceding the offering, God warns Moses and Aaron to move back from the tents of Kores, Abiram and Datham. Apparently fearing the consequences of what God is about to do, Moses and Aaron ask God not to punish innocent people,[221] whereupon God tells them to warn the others. Moses says to Kores, Abiram and Datham, who are standing at the entrance of their tent: "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things".[222] After this the earth opens and the three men disappear, together with their families. After this the men making the offering are consumed by the fire.[223]

In *Antiquitates* the structure of the story is different. It is more elaborate and at the same time also simpler than in Numbers. Kores is angry with Moses for having appointed Aaron high priest. He makes a long speech to the people, aiming to incite them against Moses. He asks why he himself was not appointed high priest, since he is the richest of the Levites and older than Moses. In any case, he says, if the priesthood ought not to be given to him, but to the oldest men among the tribes, then it should be given to Datham, Abiram or Phalaus, the eldest of the Ruben tribe. Moses reacts to this by saying that it was not him who appointed Aaron, but God. But to avoid any problems Aaron is willing to lay down his office "as an open prize to be sued for by any

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[218] In Numbers Kores is called Korah, but for clarity's sake I retain here the form Josephus uses.
[219] Num 16:1–7.
[220] Num 16:15.
[221] This is the supposedly parallel prayer.
[222] Num 16:28.
[223] Num 16:8–35.

who will".[224] To achieve this he proposes that everyone who wants the appointment should come the next day bringing a censer, with incense and fire. Everyone will then burn their incense, so that God can choose whose incense pleased him the most. This person will then be appointed high priest.[225]

The people agree to this proposal. The next day, when the people are all waiting, Kores shows up but Abiram and Datham do not. Moses sends for them, but they refuse to come and say that they do not accept Moses as a leader. Then Moses goes to their tent, where they are standing with their whole family. It is at this point in Josephus' account that Moses says the long prayer, which appears to make it parallel to Moses' speech at Numbers 16:28–30. After the prayer, the earth opens up and Abiram, Datham and their family vanish into it. The incense burning then commences, and everyone who is making an offering, including Kores, is consumed by a fire from heaven, except Aaron.

The result of the changes made by Josephus is that Moses' prayer becomes more effectual, in three ways. First, in the biblical version Moses and Aaron say the prayer together, whereas Josephus has Moses pray alone. Secondly, in Numbers, Abiram and Datham vanish into the earth after Moses speaks to them, whereas in *Antiquitates* this occurs as the direct result of Moses' *prayer*. The third difference is that in *Antiquitates* Kores does not vanish together with Abiram and Datham, but later with the men making the burnt offerings. The reason for this could be that Moses, and God, first react to the fact that Abiram and Datham refuse to come and to obey Moses as a leader, whereas this is not true of Kores. It therefore seems more appropriate not to make Kores die with Abiram and Datham but to kill him later when he takes part with the others in the offering.

A remarkable difference between the two versions is that in Numbers God warns Moses and Aaron to stand aside, whereas in *Antiquitates* this is unnecessary: the fire simply does not touch Aaron. This suggests that Josephus considered it important to portray God as having the power to destroy only those he wants to destroy, whereas the biblical text suggests that in projecting his fire onto the earth God was limited in its capacity to discriminate targets.

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[224] AJ 4.29.
[225] AJ 4.14–34.

As for the content of the two prayers, at the end of his prayer Josephus included the request (which in the biblical text was made by Moses and Aaron together) for God not to punish the whole gathering. Moses asks God not to let the ones who rightly followed his commands pay penalty for the ones who sinned.[226]

In Josephus' account, the prayer is introduced with the statement that Moses raised his hands to heaven and called out so loud that the whole crowd could hear him; in the biblical text, Moses and Aaron fall upon their faces. Raising one's hands to heaven was a very common prayer gesture: the Greeks thought it to be universal, and evidence for this gesture is found in many other cultures.[227] Praying aloud was also common practice, while silent prayer was rare and seen as odd or even dishonourable.[228] The fact that Moses calls out 'loud-sounding' indicates that he thought it necessary for the people to hear what he had to say.[229]

The prayer roughly follows the *invocatio—pars epica—prex ipsa* structure. The *invocatio* is the address (40–41), in which God is called on to give help; the *pars epica* is the background to the request (43b–45), in which Moses compares himself with God and relates all the things God did for the Hebrews; and the *prex ipsa* is the request itself (47–50) asking God to show his power and to punish those who have done wrong. In between are two parts which are harder to classify: 42–43 explains how Moses is accused of wrongful actions, and in 46 Moses says to God: "you know that I have done right". In my view these statements can be included in the *pars epica*—together with the story that forms the basis of the request, they constitute the argument of the prayer.

The argument of the prayer has two parts. The first is that God knows that Moses has always done the right thing. Everything Moses had done was done according to the will of God, and therefore God should punish those who go against Moses. Moses even refers to God's

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[226] See the discussion of Noah's prayer after the Flood, pp. 60–62.

[227] Aristotle, *De mundo* 400a 16; Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 189; Harding, 'Making', 60. See also p. 52.

[228] Van der Horst, 'Silent'.

[229] Opposite to this remark here is the remark in Josephus' own prayer, BJ 3.354, that he said his prayer "without being noticed". Similar to this is *Joseph and Aseneth* 11:3 where Aseneth prays with her mouth closed. After Joseph's first visit, in her days of repentance over it, she says several prayers; one of them introduced with the words: "She said in her heart without opening her mouth".

having helped him because he had pity on the Hebrews.[230] The second is a corollary of the accusation made against Moses. Moses says that in accusing him the people also accuse God himself, despite all the things he has done for them. The things God has done for the people are then summed up by Moses and form a second, indirect argument in the prayer that resembles *da-quia-dedisti*.[231] God has done these things in the past, and on this basis Moses argues that he should help again now.

A. *The prayer*

The invocation, "Master of all that is in heaven and in earth and in sea", is parallel to the invocation Moses and Aaron make in the Bible, saying "God of the spirits of all living beings". Effectively this is the same invocation, although Josephus makes it fit better with the intellectual climate of his own time and place, as he does with Solomon's prayer at the Temple dedication, where, in referring to the place where God dwells, he adds 'air', thus bringing in the four elements.

This is a very purposeful invocation. With these words, Moses indicates that God is master of everything, and thereby of everyone. The people accuse Moses of lording it over them, but Moses absolves himself of responsibility for this by invoking God as the master of all that occurs.

1. *Judge and witness*

The main theme of the prayer is that God is Moses' witness. Firstly when he says (40): "you are for me the most important witness of the things done by me", and again (41), "the events after that (…) be my witness of them", and later again (46) when Moses asks God to be his witness: "come master of all, as my judge and incorruptible witness". Asking God to be one's witness occurs frequently in prayers in Josephus.[232]

It was widespread practice in the ancient world to call upon God (or the gods) to be one's witness, and it occurs in both the Old Testament

[230] For a discussion of this topic see the treatment of Amram's prayer, pp. 83–84.

[231] 'Give, because you have given (previously)'; see Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 17 ff.

[232] Pheroras' wife, BJ 1.595; Antipater BJ, BJ 1.639; Josephus, BJ 3.354; Titus, BJ 5.519; Antipater AJ, AJ 17.128. See also the list of prayer subjects at the end of this book. But there are more instances in which God is called as a witness; however, because these callings lack content, they have not been regarded as prayers in this study; see for example AJ 1.209, 243; 2.23; 5.113; 6.230, 276; 17.129; CA 2.290.

and in Greek literature. In ancient Near Eastern texts gods are not called upon as witnesses, but they do play that role.[233] In the Old Testament a variety of objects can be called upon as witnesses (for example a stone pillar or an altar);[234] so too can God be. In, for example, Genesis 31:50 Laban says to Jacob: "remember that God is a witness between you and me". And Job says that his witness is in heaven (meaning of course God).[235] Applying the role of witness to God has strong connections with the idea of a covenant.[236]

Examples of God-called-upon-as-witness in Greek literature include Thucydides 4.87.2, where a certain Brasidas says in a speech: "I shall make the gods and heroes of your country my witnesses"; and Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 1248, where Heracles answers his son Hylla, who asks whether Heracles really commands him to marry Iole: "I do, and I call on the gods to bear me witness!"; and Polyneices in Euripides' *Phoenissae* (491), who calls the gods to be his witness.

Both μάρτυς ('witness') and δικαστής ('judge') are terms derived from judicial practice. As we saw, μάρτυς occurs more frequently, but in AJ 9.169 we see another instance in which μάρτυς and δικαστής are used together as an image of God: "As he died, however, Zacharias made God the witness and judge of what he had suffered in being so cruelly and violently put to death (…)". Other terms derived from legal practice that are used by Josephus are μεσίτης ('mediator') and κριτής ('judge').[237] In the Bible God is frequently called a judge.[238]

Moses needs not only a witness to his righteousness, but an incorruptible one. The word ἀδωροδόκητος, 'incorruptible', occurs very rarely. In Josephus it occurs only once. Josephus probably wanted to stress the incorruptibleness of God in contrast to characters of persons like Kores, Abiram and Datham, who pride themselves on their wealth.

2. *"Come, Lord"*

In 40 Moses asks God "to come as a hearer of all those words". And in 46 he repeats the request for God to "come, master of all". Asking a god to come to one occurs often in Greek prayer. The speaker requests the

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[233] Mullen, 'Witness', 906.
[234] Resp. Gen 31:44 and Josh 22:26–27.
[235] Job 16:19.
[236] Mullen, 'Witness', 905.
[237] See Schlatter, *Wie*, 56.
[238] See e.g. Gen 18:25, Judg 11:27, Job 9:15, 23:7, Isa 33:22, Ps 7:12.

god's attention; at the same time it is an invocation. In Greek there are several words that can be used to attract a god's attention. For example κλῦθι asks god to hear. However Josephus never uses this word. The word most commonly used to ask a god to come to one is ἐλθέ,[239] as is used here. Josephus does so only twice, both times in this prayer. It is interesting, however, that although Josephus does not use the word κλῦθι to ask God to hear, he does ask God to come *as a hearer*.[240]

Another word used to ask God to come to one is the Aramaic *maranatha*, which means 'Come, Lord'.[241] This is to be found in 1 Corinthians 16:22, where Paul ends his letter by saying: "*Maranatha!* The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus". This Aramaic saying also occurs in the Didache, namely at the end of a thanksgiving prayer.[242] Elsewhere in the New Testament the same idea (though not expressed in Aramaic) is to be found: in Revelation 22:20 when Jesus is asked to come the word used is ἔρχου.

3. *God's will*

Four times in this prayer, Josephus has Moses mention God's will, though he uses a variety of words for it. Twice he uses γνώμη, once βουλή and once βούλησις. The latter word is mostly used in the expression βούλησις θεοῦ, which is very common in *Antiquitates* but does not occur in *De bello Judaico*. The term βούλησις (or one of its cognates) is also the one that Josephus uses most for God's will, but γνώμη also occurs. He never uses θέλημα or θέλησις, and only occasionally δοκεῖν.[243] In Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, Josephus used βούλησις once, γνώμη twice.[244]

This topic was discussed in the paragraph concerning CA 2.195–197. There the conclusion was that, in *Contra Apionem*, God's will mainly referred to the law. In Moses' prayer, however, this seems to have

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[239] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 136.

[240] Cf. the closing of the 16th beracha of the rabbinical *tefilla*, which calls God, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה, 'he who hears the prayer'.

[241] This can be read either as *maran atha* or *marana tha*. The two readings end up meaning the same thing.

[242] Did 10:6.

[243] Schlatter, *Wie*, 25–27. Josephus uses βούλησις as God's will 45 out of the 71 times he uses the word; out of the many times he uses γνώμη there are only 24 instances in which it refers to God's will.

[244] Originally these words have a different meaning: γνώμη is used in a cognitive sense, whereas βούλησις represents the voluntary field; however, in usage there is great overlap in their meaning (see for example Liddell & Scott, *Lexicon*, γνώμη sub. II.2).

changed. In 40 Moses says that God is his witness as to "how everything happened according to your will (γνώμη)". This is stated parallel to the previous sentence ("you are witness of the things done by me"), so it must denote the exodus of the Jewish people, their escape from Egypt and perhaps also the journey through the desert as far as the place where they are at this point. In 42 Moses says: "I had secured for myself a life free from business by my bravery and your will" (βουλή, which also means 'decision' or 'plan', but appears in this prayer to be used in a way similar to the other expressions indicating God's will); it is most likely that Moses here refers to his own escape from Egypt. In 43, the reference is to the escape from Egypt once more, this time again the people's escape: "you ordered me to take out for Egypt and reveal your will (γνώμη) to them". In the prayer of Moses by the Red Sea God's will is mentioned with reference to the exodus as well. Here Josephus used βούλησις: Moses says that the army "has left Egypt at your will". Although the exact words used are different, the two prayers show that Josephus wanted to indicate a definite connection between God's will or plan and the people's escape from Egypt.[245]

In 47, however, the meaning is wider. Josephus uses the common word βούλησις and sets it in contrast to the idea of anything happening spontaneously: Moses says that nothing happens spontaneously but that everything reaches an end under the control of God's will. This sentence expresses the general conception in Josephus' work of the will of God: in addition to the law being the will of God (as it is in *Contra Apionem*), it is also a kind of governing principle. It stands opposed to coincidence (as in Moses' prayer) or what people do by nature, as in AJ 2.161, where Joseph says to his brothers that it was by the will of God that he was mistreated and not by their own nature. Or again like Saul, who decided not to kill the enemy's king, thereby giving way to his own feelings and failing to act in accord with the will of God.[246] Other instances show that God's will can arrange things, for example in AJ 1.223, where Josephus writes that it was by the will of God that Abraham died leaving his son unscathed. Or again AJ 11.237, in which Josephus remarks that it must have been by the will of God that king Artaxerxes changed his mind about speaking to Esther even though she had not been invited.

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[245] See also AJ 2.304 (βούλημα) and 3.16 (γνώμη).
[246] AJ 6.137; Schlatter, *Wie*, 26.

In the Septuagint βούλησις does not occur. Only a handful of Jewish writings contain the expression. The Letter of Aristeas 234 says that everything is ordained by God and ordered by his will. Eupolemus says that Saul was chosen by Samuel to be king by the will of God.[247] Philo tells in *Quis rerum divinarum haeres sit* 246 that people think that the universe will not be destroyed because it is held together by a powerful chain: the will of the creator. In the New Testament βούλησις does not occur; βούλημα and γνώμη each occur once only, with the meaning 'will of God'.[248]

4. *God's omniscience*

"For neither what is done, nor what is thought is hidden from you". This expresses God's omniscience: God knows everything that happens, including everything that is said and thought. Another prayer in which this is said is Solomon's first prayer at the Temple,[249] where he says that the new Temple is proof that God is near. To illustrate God's nearness he says: "you see all things and hear all things". Josephus refers to God as being all-seeing and all-hearing in two other passages. First, in his own appeal to the people in their war against the Romans he says that God has fled to the Romans, and asks who still believes that God will remain with a man who left his house and its inhabitants: "God, who sees every secret thing and hears what is buried in silence".[250] The second time is at the end of *Contra Apionem*, where he asks what (among other things) is more beneficial than "to be convinced that everything in the whole universe is under the eye and direction of God".[251] Josephus believed that God sees and hears all things—a belief that was widespread in his time.

In Greek literature the omniscience of God or gods is a common theme that is often connected with the concept of providence. As early as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* it is said that Zeus is all-knowing. Xenophanes applied this attribute to his monotheistic conception of deity, saying that God (θεός) was "all sight, all understanding, all hearing".[252] In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates claimed "the gods" or "deity" to

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[247] Eupolemus apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.30.2.
[248] βούλημα: Rom 9:19 and γνώμη: Rev 17:17.
[249] AJ 8.107–108.
[250] BJ 5.413.
[251] CA 2.294.
[252] Xenophanes, fragment B24 Diels-Kranz.

be omniscient,[253] Plato shared these views,[254] and in Stoic philosophy too this quality belongs to divine nature.[255]

In the Bible omniscience is not explicitly mentioned in the historical books, and it is not emphasised as an attribute of God there. In Psalms and wisdom literature, the idea of an omniscient God is expressed, although in guarded terms, and his knowledge consists essentially in *seeing* everything that happens.[256] One of the best known instances of God's omniscience in the Bible is Psalm 139, which says: "You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord".[257] In the prophetical literature the idea manifests itself in various forms, concerning punishment, the impious man who denies that God sees everything, or the man who cannot hide from God or evade his sight.[258] It is possible that the idea of God's omniscience among the Israelites has its origin in the prophetical literature, but many scholars believe the idea was of foreign, probably Babylonian or Egyptian, origin.[259] In later Jewish literature the concept is more widespread.[260] A very important passage relating to this topic is to be found in Jesus Sirach 17, in particular verses 15 and 19–20, where he says: "Their ways are always known to him; they will not be hid from his eyes" (15); and "All their works are as clear as the sun before him, and his eyes are ever upon their ways. Their iniquities are not hidden from him, and all their sins are before the Lord" (19–20).

5. *"I have done good, but they suspect me of wrongdoing"*

This is the main theme of the prayer. The theme is present in the brief prayer in Numbers 16:15, where Moses prays to God because Abiram and Datham have refused to come to the meeting: "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I

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[253] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.19; 4.18.
[254] Plato, *Leges* 901d, 905a.
[255] Pettazzoni, *All-knowing*, 145–151.
[256] Pettazzoni, *All-knowing*, 97–104. See for example: Job 34:21; Ps 1:6 (LXX); 90:8; 139; Prov 5:21; 15:3.
[257] Ps 139:2–4.
[258] Isa 37:28; Jer 23:23–24; 32:19; Hos 7:2.
[259] Pettazzoni, *All-knowing*, 106–109.
[260] See for example, Sir 17:15–24; 4 Macc 1:12; 13:19; Ps. Sol. 9:4; *L.A.B.* 18:4; 21:2; Let. Aris. 132, 210.

wronged any of them". Josephus picks up this theme, but elaborates it extensively. In 42–43 as well as 46 Moses says something similar, and even brings God into the matter by saying that he too is probably suspected of having done wrong by the people. Moses wants to make clear how unfair his situation is: the people accuse him of wrongdoing despite his having sacrificed, for their sake, the peaceful life that he had managed to secure for himself, and despite the fact that the people owe it to him that they are still living.

Similar to this aspect of the prayer is a prayer said by Tobit after he has become blind. He has an argument with his wife about a young goat she has received as a present from her employers. His wife refuses to return the goat and hurls reproaches at him concerning his well known acts of charity and righteousness. Then Tobit is grieved and prays. He refers to his own righteous acts in the past and asks God to let him die now, because with all the undeserved insults he has received it would be better to die.[261]

Moses turns to God with these arguments. He knows God punishes those who have done wrong; and he persuades God to mete out punishment in this case by equating God's position with his own, telling him that the people suspect him too of wrongdoing. Moses has told the people that it was God who appointed Aaron high priest, but still they want to hold an open competition for the appointment, implying, Moses claims, that they consider God's choice to be wrong, despite all the things God has done for the Hebrews. To underline this, he gives a complete enumeration of God's deeds.[262]

The underlying theme of God punishing those who have done wrong is stressed in 50, where Moses says that if the accusations made against him are true, then God should punish him with the same punishment that he, Moses, called upon God to visit on Abiram, Datham and their families. Moses' proposal that he be punished himself if he has done wrong is new—it does not occur in the biblical text. But the suggestion that he himself may not have acted in accord with God's will does occur there: in the speech preceding the offering Moses says:

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[261] Tob 2:11–3:6.

[262] The way Josephus does this is by using *Partizipialstil*: that is, writing several sentences in a row that have a participle as the main verb (Norden, *Agnostos* 166–168). Norden discusses this device, although he mainly treats these constructions as they are used in invocations, as is for example done in the fifth speech of the emperor Julian, who varies invocations with participle constructions; and he mentions many other examples in Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. (Norden, *ibid.*, 167).

> This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea. If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt.[263]

Moses' statement that he may be wrong in believing that he has acted in accord with God's will is thus present in both versions of the story. However, it is Josephus' addition that Moses suggests he himself be punished if he is wrong. Perhaps Josephus did this to stress Moses' fairness, and also how self-confident Moses was in a position to be.

The suggestion Moses makes to God in his prayer as to how God should punish Abiram and Datham is indeed carried out by God. God responds in this way to two other prayers of Moses in *Antiquitates*, namely the prayer at the Red Sea, in response to which God puts into effect one of the solutions suggested by Moses;[264] and secondly the prayer at Rephidim, in which Moses, in contrast to the corresponding prayer in Exodus, knows what action by God will allay the anger of the people.[265] However, in the present case the punishment is suggested in the biblical text, and Josephus simply retained this.

XI. Joshua: AJ 5.39–41

> (38) (…) Seeing his army thus cast down, a prey to gloomy expectations about everything, he spoke frankly to God. (39) For he said: "not by willfulness have we been induced to subjugate this land with arms, but because Moses, your servant, has incited us to this; [Moses] whom you by many tokens have promised to give us to acquire this land and to make our army always better with weapons than the enemy. (40) And indeed, some things you promised us, have befallen us, but now, after we have experienced an unexpected downfall and thereby have lost some of the army, we are bending under [the fear] that the things from you, and what Moses predicted, are not sure; yes, even worse: the expectation of the things that are still to come grieves us, having met with such a first experience. (41) But *you*, Lord, have power to find healing for these things;

[263] Num 16:28–30.
[264] Moses at the burning bush, AJ 2.337.
[265] Moses at Rephidim, AJ 3.34.

> dispel our present distressing situation by giving us victory and [dispel] the despair concerning the future, which is in our mind". These things Joshua asked from God, having fallen on his face.

The context of this prayer in *Antiquitates* is the same as in the Bible. The Israelites have conquered and destroyed Jericho, and now Joshua, who has been their leader since the death of Moses, has sent 3000 men to the city of Naia.[266] However, the citizens of Naia resist and 36 Israelite men are killed. The Jews are shocked when they hear about this, and the news causes great pain and despondency among them, particularly as they "believed themselves already masters of the country and [they believed] that they would keep their army unscathed in the combats" because God had promised them it would be so.[267] In *Antiquitates* the Israelites go into mourning, putting on sackcloth and lamenting all through the day. In the biblical text, by contrast, only Joshua is said to be mourning. In both texts, this is the moment at which Joshua says his prayer.

This difference as to who is said to be mourning is the only difference between the two versions in their accounts of the story leading up to the prayer. However, the accounts of the content of Joshua's prayer differ more significantly, and the changes Josephus made in the prayer may explain why he shifted the mourning from Joshua himself to the people. This will be discussed later.

It turns out that the reason for the defeat is that someone has stolen objects consecrated to God. If the person who is guilty of this is caught and punished, the people will forever be assured of victory over their enemies. The culprit is then found and put to death.

A. *The prayer*

1. *The differences*

The content of the prayer in *Antiquitates* is entirely different from that of the prayer in the biblical version. The impression one has in the biblical version is that Joshua is quite angry with God. He reproaches God on behalf of the people for having given them false hope, and for not helping them when they need him. Joshua asks God why he let the Israelites cross the river Jordan if it was not meant to be that they would defeat their enemies. He then says that now that they have

[266] In the Book of Joshua the city is called Ai.
[267] AJ 5.37.

been defeated by the Naians, the Canaanites will surround them and wipe them from the earth. He demands: "what then will you do for your own great name?"; in other words: who will you then have left to honour you?[268] On a verbal level no request is made in this prayer, but there is nonetheless an implicit demand for help.

Not surprisingly Josephus seems to have had a problem with Joshua's bold, rather offensive prayer. To deal with this, Josephus first writes that Joshua spoke 'frankly' to God: παρρησία,[269] having plucked up all his courage in order to address him, and secondly he moderates the aggressive way in which God is addressed in the biblical version. Joshua reminds God of the promises he made to Moses, and acknowledges that many of them have been kept. But now things are not going well, and people are starting to doubt God's promise. They are fearful of the future. In *Antiquitates* Joshua's question is whether God wants to put things right: to dispel the grief of the people and their despair concerning the future. The depth of their dismay is shown by the fact that Josephus does not simply write 'the despair concerning the future', but adds "which is in our mind (τῆς διανοίας)".[270]

Josephus evidently wanted to turn the rather negative impression Joshua makes in the biblical text into something more positive. To accomplish this he changed the content of the prayer and had the people do the mourning rather than Joshua himself. In Joshua it is said of the people that their hearts "melted and became like water".[271] Josephus probably understood this to mean that the people were weeping. By not having Joshua mourn, but the people, Josephus made the statement about watery hearts clearer, and made Joshua come across as a stronger person, one who oversees the problem rather than one who is part of it. This is underlined by the fact that Josephus writes that Joshua began to pray 'frankly', which indicates that Joshua was not lying on the ground in mourning.

2. *Αὐθαδεία versus Moses*

By having Joshua mention αὐθαδεία ('willfulness') at the start of the prayer, Josephus heavily stresses the role 'willfulness' played—or rather

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[268] Josh 7:7–9.

[269] For discussion of the word παρρησία I refer to Van Unnik, 'The Christians' freedom of speech in the New Testament', in: *Sparsa Collecta* 2, 1980, pp. 269–289.

[270] AJ 5.41.

[271] Josh 7:5.

did not play—in the actions of the Israelites. Joshua says that the Israelites did not attack the Canaanites because it was their will to do so, but because Moses told them to do it. This is transparently a way of shifting the blame. It is Moses who incited the Israelites to attack all these cities, and Moses, of course, only does what God wills. And it is Moses whom God promised that the Israelites would be invincible. In this way Joshua assigns responsibility for the defeats not to the people and himself but to Moses and God. He says the people did nothing wrong out of willfulness or pride—all they did was listen to Moses. Here Josephus opposes 'acting from willfulness' to 'listening to Moses', the first being the wrong and the second the right thing to do.

It is generally acknowledged that Moses is a key figure in Josephus' writings,[272] and this is the case in this story. In the biblical story Joshua's prayer makes no reference to Moses at all. Josephus has Joshua refer to the promises made to Moses that the Israelites would be invincible in battle and that they would take possession of the land.[273] In 5.40 Joshua says that the people are being ground down by the fear that "the things from you, and what Moses predicted" are not true. This too gives a prominent role to Moses, who is doubted in the same way God is doubted. Because Moses is such a revered figure, invoking him lends legitimacy to the Israelite's actions, making it seem all the more unfair that they have lost their battles.

XII. Phinehas: AJ 5.159

> Having arrived at Bethel, the nearest city, they fasted throughout the next day and they beseeched God through Phinehas the high priest to stop his wrath against them and, being satisfied with their two defeats, to give them victory and might over their enemies. And God promised those things through Phinehas his prophet.

The context of this prayer is one of strife between the Benjaminites and the other tribes of Israel. Except for a few minor differences, the stories in Judges and *Antiquitates* are for the most part similar.[274] In *Antiquitates* the story goes as follows. A Levite man and his wife are

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[272] See also pp. 231–233.

[273] The signs mentioned here are probably those given to Moses at the Sinai: the burning bush, the staff turning into a serpent, and his right hand becoming chalk-white, AJ 2.264–276.

[274] Judg 19–20; AJ 5.136–165.

travelling from the town of her father back to the man's home town. In the evening they stop for the night in Gaba.[275] Here they are invited to the house of another Levite. The young men of the town, however, all Benjaminites, want some fun and ask for the man's wife. The host refuses to hand over his guest's wife, and offers his own daughter in her place. But the young men seize the man's wife, and through the night rape her again and again.[276] When the man and his wife eventually get home, she falls to the ground and expires. The man cuts the body up into twelve pieces and sends part of it to each tribe. The other eleven tribes are very upset when they receive what has been sent to them, whereupon they gather and decide to confront the Benjaminites. They first ask for extradition of the guilty men, but when the Benjaminites refuse to hand them over, they attack. The Benjaminites, however, have also assembled their men and fight back. The first two encounters are lost by the eleven tribes, and they become scared. They pull back to Bethel and ask for God's help through Phinehas, in the words of the prayer under discussion here.[277] God promises the eleven tribes victory, and indeed the next day they win. They kill many Benjaminites and set their city on fire.

Although the context of the story in Judges is similar, Josephus made one major change: he moved the whole story to the beginning of the time span covered by Judges. As a result the story from Judges 19–20 has been placed after the oracle from Judges 2. As in Judges 1, Josephus begins by relating the Israelites' conquests and the wealth they gained. He also says that the Israelites did not drive out the Canaanites. In Judges 2, an angel of God comes, an oracle as Josephus says, who tells them they have done wrong and that the Canaanites will defeat them. In Judges the Israelites react to this by wailing and sacrificing. They admit that they have done wrong. However, in *Antiquitates* the Israelites refuse to listen and, moreover, they are too indolent to be able to do

[275] Gibea in Judges.

[276] Josephus adjusted the story slightly: in Judges the men do not ask for the wife, but for the man, in order to have intercourse with him. The host does not approve and offers the wife of the man and his own daughter instead. They take only the wife. For Josephus the subject of Jewish men wanting sex with a man must have been unacceptable. Since the Benjaminites are Jews, he shows them in a less sinful light by making them ask for the woman.

[277] In Judges the Israelites also consulted God before the first two fights (Judg 20:18, 23; the third prayer is in Judg 20:27–28), but in the account of the story in *Antiquitates* they only turn to God when they are desperate.

anything at all. They go on living, but cease to observe the law and do not bother to find a leader. The quarrel between the Benjaminites and the rest of the Israelites is a direct consequence of this 'indolence'.[278]

A. *The prayer*

1. *God's wrath*

The content of the prayer differs from the one in Judges, and this is connected to Josephus' decision to move the story to an earlier point in the chronological sequence, as we described above. In Judges the tribes ask God whether they should go to war again,[279] whereas in *Antiquitates* they beseech God to let go his wrath.

The wrath God is asked to let go refers to section 133, which says that God was angered and that this led him to send an oracle to tell the Israelites that they would be attacked by the Canaanites. However, the Israelites do not change their ways, and so God is still angry, and this is the cause of the infighting. In this prayer, the Israelites finally give in, admit they have done wrong, and ask God to let go his anger, on the grounds that in suffering two defeats they have been punished enough. By contrast, in Judges there is nothing about God's being angry and, moreover, the story is not presented as a cause of discord between the tribes.

As a subject of prayer, the wrath of God and requests for him to let go of it occur several times in Josephus' work.[280] Often it is connected with the idea of forgiveness, as we can clearly see in a prayer of David's. After he has heard from his prophets that God is angry with him David begins to supplicate and entreat God to be gracious and to forgive his sin.[281] A few sections later David prays again. This time he asks God to direct his anger at him, and to spare the people.[282] Another example is a prayer by the Hebrews, who were drifting towards disorder and contempt of God. When they see the Philistines and Ammanites advancing upon them, they sober up and beseech God to be merciful and to cease his wrath.[283] This prayer is also an example of those in which God is asked to show compassion. This is closely

[278] AJ 5.135.
[279] Judg 20:28.
[280] See also the list of prayer subjects at the end of this book.
[281] David asking for forgiveness, AJ 7.321.
[282] David trying to stop the pestilence, AJ 7.328.
[283] Hebrews, AJ 5.256.

related to asking for forgiveness and for the cessation of wrath, for the same subjects are combined in a prayer Deborah says at the request of the Israelites.[284]

Unlike Philo, who considered wrath too human a feeling for God to be capable of,[285] Josephus seems to have been at ease with a fairly anthropomorphic conception of God; he simply takes over the biblical idea of God's wrath. In the Jewish Bible reference to God's wrath occurs frequently.[286] Evidently, all biblical authors shared the opinion that God has the ability to get angry about things that displease him.[287]

2. *Praying by proxy*

Phinehas prays on behalf of the people. This is normal: in Josephus' works as in the Bible and other ancient texts, people often ask a priest or priestess to say prayers on their behalf. Even in earliest times there were people who acted as deputies, praying either for a group or for an individual.[288]

In Greek religion, too, a priest could perform a prayer on behalf of others; and there were certain occasions when only this would do. This was the case with public sacrifices, although if no priest was available someone could be chosen by lot to take the priest's role and perform the religious rites.[289]

In the Bible it is a common occurrence, and Josephus includes the practice in his retelling. In both Josephus and the Bible, Samuel, for example, sometimes prays on behalf of others,[290] as do Deborah and Ezra.[291] Another clear example in *Antiquitates* is Elissaeus, who is asked to pray at a dinner. He then prays for the happiness of the king and his subjects.[292]

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[284] Israelites through Deborah, AJ 5.200–201; a third example of asking for compassion is the prayer by Hagar, AJ 1.188, who is afraid of Sarah's revenge. Other prayers asking for forgiveness or cessation of wrath are Cain, AJ 1.58; Noah after the Flood, AJ 1.96–98; Samson, AJ 5.302; Jonah, AJ 9.214 and The people repenting, AJ 10.64.

[285] Van der Horst, 'Philo'.

[286] E.g. Exod 4:14; Num 25:3–4; Josh 7:1; 2 Sam 6:7; 2 Kgs 24:19–20; Isa 30:27; Ezek 22:31.

[287] Van der Horst, 'Philo', 78.

[288] Heiler, *Gebet*, 54 and 56.

[289] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 166–186.

[290] Samuel at Mizpah, AJ 6.25 and Samuel's prayer for Saul to be forgiven, AJ 6.143.

[291] Israelites through Deborah, AJ 5.200–201 and Ezra about mixed marriages, AJ 11.143–144.

[292] Elissaeus, AJ 12.98.

Persons who ask a prophet or priest to pray on their behalf are Saul, David, Jeroboam and Ahab.[293] It should be noted that these are all kings. Kings had their own prophets and priests and could ask them to perform their prayers. Ordinary people probably had to say their prayers themselves. This is in accordance with the Bible.

It appears that one could ask either a prophet or a priest (or more than one) to pray on one's behalf. It is possible that Josephus did not distinguish between these, since in this prayer by Phinehas both words are used for the same person: at the beginning of the prayer Phinehas is called 'high priest' (ὁ ἀρχιερεύς) and at the end 'prophet' or 'the one who interprets' (προφητεύσας).

XIII. Manoah and His Wife: AJ 5.276 & 5.280

The next two prayers are more interesting for their function in the narrative than for their contents, which in any case are not given but only referred to indirectly. Translation of the prayers is therefore unnecessary, and I will concentrate on their function in their narrative context instead.

Manoah and his wife are the parents of Samson, a biblical character whose extreme strength resides in his long hair. This passage concerns the time before Samson's birth. In broad outline the story in *Antiquitates* is the same as in Judges.[294] There are some significant differences, however, especially with regard to the prayers.

In *Antiquitates* Manoah is said to be 'madly in love' with his wife. However, the couple seem to be unable to get children. Manoah often takes his wife out for a walk and asks God for legitimate offspring. This is the first prayer (276) mentioned in the *Antiquitates* telling. It is not present in the biblical text. Josephus presents this prayer as one Manoah says every day.[295] One day an angel appears before Manoah's wife. The angel is very handsome and tells her that she will become a mother. Her son will fight against the Philistines. The angel warns her never to cut his hair and to let him get used to drinking only water and nothing else. She tells Manoah about the angel's message and his attractiveness.

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[293] Saul through high priest Achitob, AJ 6.122, Saul at Gilboa, AJ 6.328; David at Sikella, AJ 7.7; Jeroboam, AJ 8.234; Ahab, AJ 8.401.

[294] Resp. AJ 5.276–284 and Judg 13:2–23.

[295] Another prayer that is said daily is Samuel's daily prayer for the name of the future king, AJ 6.49.

Manoah, who is very jealous, does not believe her and wants to see the angel himself. Therefore his wife prays to God to send the angel again. This is the second prayer in *Antiquitates* (280). The angel appears again, but just when Manoah is outside, so his wife goes out to call him. When Manoah sees the angel, he asks the angel to repeat to him the message he gave his wife, but the angel refuses. Manoah then asks the angel to stay for dinner. The angel burns the meat and bread and disappears in the smoke. At this point Manoah believes he has seen God and says to his wife they will now suffer misfortune. The wife gets pregnant and they name their son Samson (which means 'strength').

The biblical story differs at several points. To start with the prayers, in Judges there is only one prayer. Manoah's daily prayer is not mentioned and so, when the angel appears for the first time, he does so without his appearance having been prayed for. After this first appearance to Manoah's wife, Manoah prays to God to send the angel again.[296] This also differs from *Antiquitates*, where Josephus makes the *wife* pray for the reappearance.

The second difference is the attractiveness of the angel, and related to this the jealousy of Manoah, which is not mentioned anywhere in Judges. In addition, the fact that Manoah was 'madly in love' with his wife (276) is not to be found in Judges. All of these are additions made by Josephus to romanticise the story.[297] Moreover, they give the second prayer a different motive to that in the biblical text. The motive in *Antiquitates* is Manoah's disbelief, whereas in Judges Manoah prays in order to get more information.

Comparing Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (which also has two prayers instead of one) with Josephus' account we see some similarities.[298] The most important similarity to Josephus in contrast to the biblical text, besides the presence of two prayers, is the motive for the second prayer. Unlike in Josephus, in Pseudo-Philo Manoah is not madly in love—he even proposes to divorce his wife because she cannot get children. But his wife answers that this might not be her fault but his, and therefore she asks God to tell them which of them is responsible for their infertility. An angel comes and tells her that it is she who is responsible, but that God has heard her tears and will give her a son.

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[296] Judg 13:8.
[297] Feldman, *Josephus'*, 475.
[298] *L.A.B.* 42.

The angel does not say anything about not cutting the boy's hair, but does say that he should drink only water. She goes to Manoah and tells him the good news. He does not believe her and therefore prays for the angel to appear again. Manoah's doubt here does not stem from jealousy; however, as in *Antiquitates*, a motive is given for the prayer, whereas in Judges the motive is left unclear.

Another similarity is in the message of the angel. Both Josephus and Pseudo-Philo say that the angel told Samson's mother to let him drink only water, whereas in Judges the advice concerns herself, and not her son. This change was probably made by both Josephus and Pseudo-Philo to defend Samson's reputation. When he is older and famous for his strength he falls in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. Delilah asks Samson the secret of his strength; but not falling into the trap, he refuses to tell her. In the end, however, he relents and tells her that his strength is due to his hair. While he is sleeping Delilah cuts off Samson's hair, and the Philistines capture him.[299]

Samson is destroyed by his love for a treacherous woman. This is not a very heroic story. Josephus and Pseudo-Philo both blame Samson's error on his being drunk, an idea that cannot be derived from the biblical text. Josephus says that Delilah plied Samson with drink when she repeatedly asked him to reveal his secret,[300] and Pseudo-Philo says that Samson was drunk when Delilah cut off his hair.[301] It is possible that in the period up to the first century CE a tradition developed about Samson's demise, in which it was blamed partly on his drunken state rather than solely on his love for a courtesan. If this is the case, then it is very likely that awareness of this tradition led both Josephus and Pseudo-Philo construe the angel's instruction to drink only water as being directed at Samson and not his mother.

We have seen that Pseudo-Philo's account also has two prayers instead of one. The people who pray, however, are reversed with respect to Josephus' account. Pseudo-Philo gives a more important role to Manoah's wife, who invokes the first appearance of the angel. In the *Biblical Antiquities* Manoah's wife also has a name:[302] here too she is accorded more importance than she is in Josephus' account.

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[299] Judg 16:4–22.
[300] AJ 5.307–313.
[301] *L.A.B.* 43.6–7.
[302] She is called Eluma there, *L.A.B.* 42.1.

Why Josephus put two prayers in the story instead of one can probably be explained by the romantic twist he wanted to give the story. The first prayer is said daily by Manoah because he desperately wants a child with his beloved wife, and the second is said by his wife to show her husband that his doubt is unjustified. Alternatively it is possible that over the preceding centuries the story had evolved into one with two prayers, since Pseudo-Philo, who wrote in about the same period as Josephus, also has two prayers, and that Josephus simply carried this tradition on.

A. *Manoah's prayer*

1. *Asking for children*

The main request Manoah makes in his prayer is to be given children. Asking God to grant children occurs several times in Josephus; in the Bible, too, it is common practice. The prayers in Josephus' works which do this are as follows. Jacob's wife Leah prays continually for children because she is jealous of Jacob's love for Rachel.[303] In the corresponding account in Genesis 29 there is no mention of Leah supplicating God, although the reason God grants her children is that she is not loved by Jacob. The second instance is Manoah's prayer. Not many sections later, Hannah makes a vow that she will fulfil, provided she is given a son.[304] The last instance is King Hezekiah, although he asks for children only indirectly. When he hears that he is ill and will soon die, Hezekiah supplicates God to grant him some additional years of life, so that he can get children and leave a dynasty.[305] This prayer will be discussed later. In all these instances the prayer is answered by God: all the requests are granted.

There is one more prayer we need to discuss at this point. It is one that is not in *Antiquitates* though it is in the Bible; it is a request made by Isaac. In Genesis 25:21 Isaac prays God to grant his wife Rebekah children because she is infertile, and God grants his request. Josephus does not mention this prayer, nor does he mention Rebekah's infertility. The only action Isaac undertakes in *Antiquitates* is to ask God why Rebekah's belly is so inordinately big. However, if this is parallel to Rebekah's question in Genesis 25:22 as to why the children are so busy

[303] Leah, AJ 1.303.
[304] Hannah's vow, AJ 5.344.
[305] Hezekiah's asking for a longer life, AJ 10.26.

in her body, then Josephus omitted Isaac's prayer deliberately. Why he might have done so, however, remains unclear.

In any event, of the four prayers in Josephus' works which ask for children, three do not have biblical parallels. On the other hand, Josephus omitted one such prayer which is in the Bible. He cannot therefore be said to have had a systematic policy with regard to this kind of prayer.

In the Epidaurian miracle inscriptions there are five instances of people who came to the deities Asklepios or Apollo on account of their inability to have children. All five inscriptions concern requests made by women.[306] In addition, there is one inscription concerning a woman who came to the god because she had been pregnant for five years; she did not ask explicitly for children, but her supplication was concerned with pregnancy.[307]

B. *The prayer by Manoah's wife*

1. *Asking God to demonstrate his power*

As regards the specific request, namely the reappearance of the angel, Manoah's wife's prayer stands quite apart in Josephus' work. However, it does belong to the category of prayers in which, to dispel another person's disbelief, the person praying asks God to give a sign or to demonstrate his power in some way. One prayer in this category occurs shortly after Hezekiah's prayer discussed above and is said by Isaiah.[308] Hezekiah has asked God for a longer life and, through Isaiah, has been told that God will grant his request. However, Hezekiah does not believe what Isaiah says and makes him ask God to give a sign, to prove that what he says is true. Isaiah then asks God to make the sun, which has already set, throw shadows on the stairs.[309] This God does, after which Hezekiah is convinced.

The prayer Elijah says when confronting the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel[310] may also be included in this category, since Elijah wants to demonstrate to the people and the priests of Baal that his God is the

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[306] LiDonnici, *Epidaurian*, [A2], B11 (31), B14 (34), B19 (39) and B22 (42).

[307] LiDonnici, *Epidaurian*, [A1]. Heiler also gives several examples of people praying for children. *Gebet*, 63–64.

[308] AJ 10.26.

[309] Isaiah, AJ 10.29.

[310] Elijah at Mount Carmel, AJ 8.342; see also the discussion of the prayer by the Israelites at Mount Carmel, pp. 171–175.

one and only true God. Thus Isaiah prays on account of Hezekiah's disbelief, Elijah on account of the people's, and Manoah's wife on account of her husband's.

XIV. Samson: AJ 5.302

> Vexed by immense thirst and understanding that human bravery is nothing, he acknowledged that all is in the hands of God and, being angry about his words, he begged him not to deliver him into the hands of his enemies, but to offer help in his distress and to protect him from evil.

In his account of Samson, Josephus followed in outline the story in Judges, which has a prayer corresponding to the one mentioned in the passage above, and he put the prayer in the same place in the story as in Judges. The substance of the two prayers, however, is rather different.

But first the story.[311] Samson meets a Philistine girl and asks his parents to let him marry her. They do not agree to this, but since it is God's will he marries her anyway. On their wedding day he presents a riddle to the thirty men who have been given to him as a present. The men do not know the answer, but they persuade Samson's wife to get him to tell it to her. She succeeds in doing this and then tells the men the answer. When they give the answer to Samson, he realises that his wife has betrayed him and is very angry. He dissolves the marriage and gives his wife to his best friend. Then he destroys the Philistines' harvest and slays several of their men,[312] after which he leaves for the region of the tribe of Judah. The Philistines march against the tribe of Judah and persuade them to extradite Samson. The men of Judah trick Samson into coming with them, and take him to the Philistine camp. However, when Samson realises what they are planning, he breaks loose, takes hold of the jawbone of an ass and uses it to slay a thousand Philistines. Afterwards he is very proud of himself on account of this. But then he gets thirsty and prays to God. It is the prayer Samson says at this point that we shall now consider. This is also the point where Josephus' account parts company with the account in Judges.

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[311] AJ 5.286–303 and Judg 14:1–15:20.

[312] In Judges he first tries to visit his ex-wife, but is not allowed to see her by her father; then he gets so angry that he destroys the harvest.

A. *The prayer*

Josephus precedes Samson's prayer in *Antiquitates* by remarking that Samson ascribed his victory to himself, and not to God's assistance. The fact that Josephus says this indicates that he disapproves of Samson's pride; moreover, he says explicitly that Samson felt proud "more than he should" (μεῖζον ἢ χρή).[313] In Judges no such disapproval of Samson's haughtiness is expressed. If anything, in Judges, Samson's prayer comes across as a reproach to God.[314] Josephus 'corrects' Samson by making him acknowledge in his prayer that everything is in the hands of God. The change Josephus made to Samson's prayer here parallels the change he made to Joshua's, which was also transformed from a reproach into something more moderate.[315]

Getting thirsty, Samson realises that it is not in his power to do anything about this, and so comes to see that God, who does have the power to slake his thirst, is in control of all things. In saying that everything is in the hands of God, Josephus again points to God's providence.[316] This indicates Josephus' desire to portray Samson as a better man (in his terms) than the one we encounter in the Bible.[317]

1. *Τῷ θεῷ πάντα*

Preceding Samson's prayer Josephus says that Samson was very proud of the things he has done, more so than he should have been (μεῖζον ἢ χρή). Later Samson becomes remorseful and realises that human bravery is worthless. He suddenly becomes aware of peoples' complete dependence on God.

The phrase τῷ θεῷ πάντα is used here for the first time by Josephus. The combination occurs 43 times in the TLG corpus, one of which is this text of Josephus'. The remaining cases are from the second century and later. In reverse order, πάντα τῷ θεῷ, the combination occurs 24 times, one of them in Josephus and again the earliest occurrence of the combination. This occurs in BJ 5.400, in Josephus' own speech to the Jewish army attempting to persuade them to surrender to the Romans.

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[313] AJ 5.301.
[314] Judg 15:18.
[315] Joshua, AJ 5.39–41, see pp. 120–123.
[316] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 117; see the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, AJ 2.335–337, pp. 95–97.
[317] See also Josephus' treatment of the message of the angel to Manoah's wife, pp. 127–130.

After having summed up previous defeats, he says that arms have not been granted to the Jews, "For it is, I suppose, the duty of the occupants of holy ground to leave everything to the arbitrament of God (πάντα τῷ θεῷ) and to scorn the aid of human hands, can they but conciliate the arbiter above". Josephus here expresses the same thought as he does in Samson's prayer—that everything is in the hands of God and that humans must leave everything to him.

The expression τῷ θεῷ πάντα belongs to the debate in early Judaism about free will and predestination. Josephus describes this debate in his characterisations of the three Jewish philosophical sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. First, in *De bello Judaico*, he writes about the existence of these three philosophical sects in Judaism. He starts by giving an elaborate description of the Essenes but only briefly describes the other two sects. Indeed, the only thing he tells us about these two sects is what their beliefs about fate and man's free will are.

In *Antiquitates* Josephus treats the subject twice. Firstly, he has a short depiction of the three sects in Book 13, stating their opinions with regard to fate and man's free will but nothing more. The Pharisees say that some things, but not all, are the work of fate. The Essenes declare that fate is the "mistress" of all things "and that nothing befalls men unless it be in accordance with her decree". The Sadducees hold that everything lies in the power of people themselves.[318] In Book 18 Josephus discusses the three sects once more.[319] Again he outlines their views about man's free will. About the Essenes he says: "The doctrine of the Essenes is wont to leave everything in the hands of God" (ἐπὶ μὲν θεῷ…τὰ πάντα).[320] It is evident from both his own speech in *De bello Judaico* and from Samson's prayer that Josephus agreed with the Essenes on this point.

2. *Samson's enemies*

In Samson's prayer Josephus has Samson ask God not to deliver him to his enemies. Parallel to this in Judges is the sentence "Must I now

[318] AJ 13.171–173.

[319] AJ 18.11–25; he adds as fourth group followers of Judas the Galilean in 23–25.

[320] In this case the expression is written as ἐπί + dative instead of only dative. However, there is no discernible difference in meaning.

(…) fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?"[321] Josephus only uses the word 'uncircumcised' (ἀπεριτμήτος) twice in his work and neither occurrence is a reference to non-Jews or enemies. The first instance is in BJ 1.34, where Antiochus Epiphanes, after he has captured Jerusalem, forces the Jews to violate their ancestral laws "by leaving their infants uncircumcised and sacrificing swine upon the altar". The second instance is in AJ 20.45. King Izates wants to become a Jew and therefore wants to be circumcised. His mother and his teacher tell him this would not be wise as it would alienate him from his subjects. But a Jew named Eleazar says that being a Jew without fulfilling the law is wrong and thus asks him: "How long will you be uncircumcised?" Then Izates has a doctor perform the surgery. Josephus approves of this action.[322]

Instead of 'the uncircumcised', Josephus calls Samson's opponents simply 'his enemies'. Some thoughts come to mind here. First, that in the ears of non-Jews 'uncircumcised' does not have the negative sound that it has for Jews. Josephus might have wanted to avoid calling Samson's enemies 'the uncircumcised' in order to make Samson's words more comprehensible to a non-Jewish audience.

Another thought that comes to mind is of course the attacks that were made on the Jews because they were circumcised, as discussed in *Contra Apionem*.[323]According to Schäfer, by the time of the first century BCE most Greek and Roman authors considered circumcision to be a typically Jewish practice. In Josephus' time, being circumcised was the distinguishing mark of a Jew (and thus of being someone obliged to pay the *fiscus Judaicus*). Roman satirists such as Horace, Petronius, Martial and Juvenal used circumcision to characterise Jews and even combined it with references to sexual potency. The custom was clearly disapproved of, although there is no evidence that it was officially prohibited in any way.[324]

In the light of these considerations, I think it becomes obvious why Josephus did not want to refer to circumcision unnecessarily. Using the word 'enemies' made the text more comprehensible to his audience and avoided providing any grounds for disapproval.

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[321] Judg 15:18.
[322] AJ 20.48.
[323] CA 2.137, 143.
[324] Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 93–105.

3. *Situation and subject*

Samson prays because he is thirsty. References to people being thirsty occur frequently in Josephus, and the topic has already been treated in the commentary on Moses' prayer at Rephidim.[325] The request for help is also common. This topic was discussed in the commentary on Moses' prayer at the Red Sea.[326]

XV. Samuel at Mizpah: AJ 6.25

> Taking a sucking lamb he sacrificed on behalf of the crowd and he called upon God to extend his right hand over them in the struggle against the Philistines and not to overlook them, by making them suffer misfortune a second time.

The people are distressed about the ark being in the hands of the Philistines. Samuel tries to reassure them and tells them that God is beginning to be gracious to them again. They should persevere in honouring him so that soon prosperity, deliverance from bondage and victory over their foes will follow.[327] In the biblical text Samuel's speech is similar although, where in Josephus he speaks only of "wickedness" (πονηρία) that the people should cast out, in the Bible he tells them to get rid of strange gods.[328] After hearing the speech the Israelites gather in Mizpah to pray and sacrifice. The Philistines hear about this gathering and advance upon them with a large army. The people become very scared. They run to Samuel and tell him that they have faith only in him and God to rescue them. Samuel thereupon tells them to take courage and have faith that God will help them. He then sacrifices and says this prayer. This is the same as in the biblical text, except that there the content of the prayer is not given.[329] God hears Samuel's prayer and accepts his sacrifice, and ensures that the Philistines are defeated.[330]

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[325] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at Rephidim, p. 102.
[326] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 94–95.
[327] AJ 6.20–21.
[328] 1 Sam 7:3.
[329] 1 Sam 7:9.
[330] 1 Sam 7:2–12; AJ 6.19–28. In 1 Sam God only makes thunder roll, which confuses the Philistines; whereas Josephus expanded God's role and made the episode much more dramatic, saying that God vexed them with an earthquake first, rocking and parting the ground, so that they were engulfed in the various chasms; he then delivered a thunder which deafened them, followed by lightning which burned their eyes and struck their weapons out of their hands (AJ 6.27).

A. *The prayer*

1. *Filling in the biblical prayer*

The biblical text does not give the content of Samuel's prayer but merely says: "Samuel called upon the Lord on behalf of Israel".[331] Evidently Josephus felt it was insufficient to leave the matter like this, since he decided to include a fully articulated prayer in his account. Josephus did this in ten other instances: Moses at Marah, AJ 3.6 (Exod 15:25); the Israelites under the Madianites, AJ 5.212 (Judg 6:7); Saul at Gilboa, AJ 6.328 (1 Sam 28:6); David's prayer for his sick son, AJ 7.154 (2 Sam 12:16); David concerning the famine, AJ 7.294 (2 Sam 21:1); the soldiers of Abijah, AJ 8.283 (2 Chr 13:14); Joash, AJ 9.175 (2 Kgs 13:4); Hezekiah asking for help, AJ 10.11 (2 Kgs 19:1); Nehemiah asking for persuasiveness, AJ 11.165 (Neh 2:4); and the people supporting Esther, AJ 11.231 (AddEsth 4:17[i]).

2. *God's right hand*

Samuel asks God to "extend his right hand" over the Hebrews. 'The hand of God' is a frequently occurring figure of speech in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East generally. In both Babylonian and Egyptian literature 'the hand of God', or 'being in the hand of God', is a metaphor for God's power and his intervention in human affairs by way of, for example, sickness and other punishments. In these cultures it occurs mostly in connection with personal religion. In Old Testament texts, the meaning of the phrase is also primarily God's power or authority, but here it relates just as often to the people as a whole as it does to single persons.[332] In Hellenistic Jewish literature, however, the image of God's hand is no longer so commonly used. Aristobulus, discussing the meaning of references to the limbs of God, explains that the hand of God should be understood as a metaphor for God's power.[333] Philo, wanting to avoid any 'anthropomorphism', also avoided using the imagery of God's hand, just as he avoided speaking of God's voice or his wrath.[334] Instead of God's hand he spoke of God's power, or, for example in case of the creation story ('God created

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[331] 1 Sam 7:9.
[332] Norin, 'Hand', 53, 59.
[333] Aristobulus, fr. 2, apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 8.10.7–9.
[334] See also the discussion of Phinehas' prayer, pp. 125–126.

the world with his hands'), of God's *logos* creating the world.[335] In the Maccabean books the expression is no longer used with reference to God's intervention in the wars of his people. The Septuagint does use the expression, but sometimes renders its meaning by translating it into 'the power of God'.[336]

Josephus speaks here of God's *right* hand. It appears that there was sometimes a difference in meaning between speaking of God's right and his left hand.[337] Some scholars argue that there are biblical instances, in Psalms and Isaiah, in which God's left hand is the strong one, occupied with earthly things, whereas his right extends to heaven.[338] Another distinction sometimes made was that God kills with his left hand and saves with his right. This occurs in some late texts. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 12:42 says that on the eve of the exodus God killed the Egyptian first-borns with his left hand, whereas he saved the Hebrew first-borns with his right.[339] This symbolism of God's left hand as the one that kills also occurs in Lactantius.[340]

Josephus uses the word δεξιά 103 times, most of them (70) in *De bello Judaico*. In *De bello Judaico* the meaning of the word is predominantly 'pledge (of protection)' or 'treaty'. In *Antiquitates* on the other hand, it is used mostly with reference to the human hand. Only twice is it used in the expression 'God's right hand'. The first time is in BJ 1.378 in a speech Herod delivers to his troops, in which he says of his adversaries that "they will not escape [God's] mighty eye, his invincible right hand". The second time is in Samuel's prayer under discussion here.

The word χείρ, 'hand', occurs a large number of times in Josephus' work. Two instances concern the hand of God, and there is one further arguable case. When king David has to choose a punishment for his sin of counting the people, he opts for pestilence, saying that it was better to fall into the hands of God (εἰς τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ χεῖρας) than into the hands of the enemy.[341] Although Josephus amplifies (in comparison to what is said in the biblical text) the reasons for David's choosing this punishment, in essence what David says there comes to about the same

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[335] Schwemer, 'Gottes Hand', 70–71.
[336] Gross, *Menschenhand*, 351; Schwemer, 'Gottes Hand', 70.
[337] Philonenko, 'Main gauche', 137–139.
[338] Ps 89:14; Isa 48:13.
[339] There is no consensus about the date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan; for the discussion see Gleßmer, *Einleitung*, 185–191.
[340] Lactantius (250–317), *Homiliae* 20.3.6; *Institutiones divinae* 2.8.6.
[341] AJ 7.323.

thing: "Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men".[342]

In AJ 3.101 Josephus tells of how Moses shows the people the two tablets inscribed with the ten commandments. He says: "and the writing thereon was from the hand of God". This remark corresponds to Exodus 31:18, which says that the tablets were "inscribed by the finger of God".[343] The slight possibility should be noted that Josephus' intended meaning here is that the tablets were *in God's handwriting*, rather than that the writing on them came from 'the hand of God' in the sense of God's power. Parallels to this are AJ 14.52, where Pompey tells Aristobulus to give orders to his garrison commanders in his own handwriting (τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρί); and 16.318, where he speaks of a letter "presumably in the handwriting of Alexander" (τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου χειρός). In both of these cases the word χείρ has nothing to do with the actual hand of the person. In the case of AJ 3.101 both interpretations seem possible.

The arguable case is CA 2.192, where Josephus treats the creation of the world. He says: "These God created, not with hands (οὐ χερσίν), not with toil (…); he willed it so". It is arguable whether this statement refers to God's hands, considering them to actually exist, or whether on the contrary it contains an implicit denial that God has any hands. Either way, however, it conjures the idea of God's hands, and therefore it is mentioned here.

Considering that Josephus only very rarely uses the expression 'God's hand' or 'God's right hand', and the fact that there is no mention of God's (right) hand in the biblical text at this point, it is all the more remarkable that he wrote Samuel's prayer in the way he did. It is not possible to give a definitive answer to the question of why Josephus did this. However, one possibility is that he was prompted by the biblical text after all. In the verse preceding Samuel's prayer (1 Sam 7:8) the Israelites ask Samuel to pray to God on their behalf in order to save them 'from the *hand*' (ἐκ χειρός, מיד) of their enemies. Perhaps this is what induced Josephus (consciously or not) to mention God's hand in Samuel's prayer. Why he chose to use δεξιά and not χείρ, however, remains unclear.

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[342] 2 Sam 24:14 and 1 Chr 21:13.
[343] See also Deut 9:10.

XVI. David's Thanksgiving Hymn: AJ 7.95

> And falling on his face he began to make obeisance and to thank God for everything that He[344] had given him when He raised him from the humble status of a shepherd to such great dominion and fame; and [he began to thank] for everything that He promised to his descendants, and also for the care that He took of the Hebrews and their freedom. Having said those things singing hymns for God he departed.

In this prayer David thanks God for promises he made about building a temple. In both biblical accounts (2 Sam and 1 Chr) as well as in *Antiquitates*, David has been starting to realise how privileged he is and to think it inappropriate for him to live in a grand house while the ark is still in a tent. He therefore asks his priest Nathan if he will be allowed to build a temple for God and his ark. Nathan, however, receives a message from God in a vision or dream[345] that someday there will be a temple, but that it will not be David who builds it, because his hands are stained with the blood of his enemies, but that David will have a son, called Solomon, who will build the Temple. Moreover, this son will be king, as will his descendants after him. If this king sins, he will be punished by God. David is very grateful for this promise and gives thanks to God.[346]

1. *Hymns*

Unlike in the biblical text,[347] in *Antiquitates* David accompanies this prayer by singing hymns. The words ὑμνεῖν and ὕμνος are used 33 times altogether by Josephus, 26 times in *Antiquitates*. The words are mostly connected with praising or thanking God and singing for him. Only in three passages is the hymn singing performed on behalf of another person.[348] As is indicated by several passages in Josephus' works, hymn singing was the special task of the Levites, who were the priestly branch of the people.[349] It appears that singing hymns was also an expression of joy. Some passages are about people going home from the temple

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[344] In this translation pronouns referring to God are capitalised for the sake of clarity.

[345] See Gnuse, *Dreams*, 172–173.

[346] 2 Sam 7 and 1 Chr 17; AJ 7.90–95.

[347] 2 Sam 7:18–29; 1 Chr 17:16–27.

[348] BJ 1.205 and AJ 14.160 on behalf of Herod, and BJ 6.105 on behalf of Jehoiachin.

[349] AJ 8.176; 9.11, 269; 11.62 and 20.218.

(or the field) while singing hymns,[350] and processions bringing the ark to the temple accompanied by singing.[351]

It appears that David was the most important hymn singer. In AJ 7.305 Josephus writes that, when he eventually no longer faced wars and dangers, David filled up his time with composing songs and hymns to God in various meters, some in trimeters and others in pentameters. Josephus is of course here referring to the Book of Psalms, which was traditionally said to come from David's hand. Another interesting reference to David's hymn singing is AJ 11.80, where Josephus writes after the finishing of the second temple: "the Levites and the sons of Asaph arose and sang the praises (ὕμνουν) of God as David had first shown how to bless him". Whether Josephus is referring here to the thanksgiving hymn of David we are treating here, or to the Psalms supposedly written by David, is not clear. What is certain, however, is that David was famous for his singing. The story of David curing Saul of bad spirits by singing hymns for him (1 Sam 16) is also told by Josephus.[352]

There is one other instance in Josephus' work (in AJ 12) where prayer and hymns are connected. Judas the Maccabee accompanies a prayer with hymns after he has defeated Gorgias. He first goes back to the town and plunders it, then rejoices and praises God in song (ὕμνῶν) for his success, as this victory contributed considerably to the people's regaining of their liberty.[353]

The difference between a prayer and a hymn needs to be clarified. In the literature on Jewish prayers and related forms of worship a distinction is made but not explained.[354] In the literature on Greek religion, however, the distinction is discussed. Ferguson states that chanted prayers were called hymns: a hymn was any metrical address to gods.[355] Rudhardt points out that a Greek was generally not satisfied with expressing his gratitude in spoken words, but found it necessary to sing. In consequence, he says, "[the Greek's] prayer takes on the proportions of a

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[350] AJ 8.124; 11.157; 12.349.
[351] AJ 7.80 and 8.102.
[352] AJ 6.166–168.
[353] Judas' hymn, AJ 12.312.
[354] See for example D. Flusser, 'Psalms, Hymns and Prayers', in: M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, Philadelphia 1984, 551–577 and J.H. Charlesworth, 'Jewish Hymns, Odes and Prayers', in: R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters*, Philadelphia 1986, 411–436.
[355] Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 150.

hymn".[356] Versnel objects to this, however, saying that it would be quite strange if at every occasion they want to express gratitude people burst out singing.[357] Bremer, in the same volume, explains that "a hymn is a sung prayer: prayer is the more general concept, and singing does not necessarily belong to it".[358] Pulleyn gives three different uses of the word ὕμνος in Greek, but all three imply that it is an address to a god: metrical, particular or general.[359]

Furley and Bremer, in their extensive work on Greek hymns, note that it remains difficult to distinguish between prayer and hymn. Both share many compositional elements, including for example a direct address of a deity. They were accompanied by the same gesture or supplication posture and they can contain the same sorts of requests.[360] The suggestion that hymns are an "artistic product",[361] whereas prayers were composed with less attention to artistic considerations, is not a distinction that can be applied rigorously: if this were a rule, there would be too many exceptions. For these reasons I agree with Furley and Bremer that "we must content ourselves with recognizing complementary forms of religious discourse here, with a greater emphasis in the case of hymns on (…) performance in the part of the worshipper(s)".[362]

Josephus' addition of hymn singing to his account of David is explicable in terms of both Greek and Jewish tradition. David's prayer is one of thanksgiving, which was in Greek religion often accompanied by singing, and David was also famous for his singing and hymns. It is therefore not unnatural that Josephus added this material to his account.[363]

A. *The prayer*

One very notable thing about this prayer is that it makes no request—it is entirely one of thanksgiving. The biblical text has more to it. David

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[356] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 43, his translation of Rudhardt, *Notions*, 199: "Sa prière prend la proportion d'un hymne".
[357] Versnel, 'Religious', 45.
[358] Bremer, 'Greek', 193.
[359] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 43–44.
[360] Furley-Bremer, *Greek* I, 3.
[361] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 49; see also Von Fritz, *Greek*, 23–28.
[362] Furley-Bremer, *Greek* I, 4; see also Race, *Style and rhetoric in Pindar's odes*, Atlanta 1990, 103 n. 50.
[363] On Josephus' use of hymns, see also Lattke, *Hymnus*, 133–134.

stresses God's promise in high-flown terms: "do now as you told, then your name will be great". Moreover, in the biblical prayer David also praises God: there is no one like you and there is no people like your people of Israel. Neither of these elements is present in Josephus' version of the prayer: the specialness of the Jewish people is not stressed at all. The other elements of the biblical prayer, however, are present in *Antiquitates*.

Josephus omits the theme of the people of Israel being especially *chosen* by God. Instead of this he used the term πρόνοια, providence. As we explained earlier, this was the concept generally used by Josephus to account for the special relationship between God and the Jewish people.[364]

1. *The acknowledgements*

As we have already seen Josephus doing, in this prayer again he uses the stylistic device of *tricolon*.[365] There are three things David expresses thanks for. The first is for God's having raised him from the humble status of shepherd to the royal status he enjoys now. This refers to how he ended up at Saul's court and was eventually anointed king. In the biblical text this material comes in God's speech preceding the prayer, where God says: "I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel".[366] In the biblical prayer, David returns to this point by saying: "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"[367]

The second thing David gives thanks for is the promises God made to him about his descendants. In AJ 7.93 Nathan is told that David will have a son and that God would allow this son, Solomon, to bring the temple into being. Furthermore, God promised that he would "preserve the kingdom for his children's children and transmit it to them". However, in the biblical text on which AJ 7.93 is based, this last promise is not explicitly mentioned. The two biblical accounts of what God said about it to Nathan do not agree, but most likely Josephus was inspired by 2 Samuel 7:16, which says: "Your house and your kingdom will endure

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[364] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 87–92. See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.

[365] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, p. 98.

[366] 2 Sam 7:8 and 1 Chr 17:7.

[367] 2 Sam 7:18 and 1 Chr 17:16.

forever before me; your throne will be established forever". This is not repeated in 1 Chronicles 17:4–14. In any event, the promises seem to have been very important for Josephus, since this is what David gives thanks for in his hymn. As we shall see, in his second prayer at the temple dedication Solomon refers to the promises again.[368]

The third thing David gives thanks for is more abstract: "the care that God took of the Hebrews and their freedom"; that is, his πρόνοια, which here seems best translated by 'care'.[369] David does not seem to refer to a specific incident with this statement. He is most likely referring to all the times in the past when God helped the Hebrews in fights and battles against their enemies. Again Josephus replaces biblical references to the covenant between God and Israel with the concept of God's πρόνοια, care, for the Jewish people.

XVII. David's Prayer for Solomon: AJ 7.380–381

> (380) Thereupon all the people rejoiced, and David, seeing the zeal and ambition of the leaders and priests and all others, began to praise God, calling him with a loud voice father and origin of the universe and creator of human and divine things with which he adorned himself; and [calling him] protector and guardian of the Hebrew nation, of their happiness and of this kingdom he had given him. (381) Thereupon he prayed for the whole people for good things and for his son Solomon for a mind sound and just, and also empowered by the other elements of virtue; and he commanded the multitude to praise God.

This prayer is the culmination of the preceding story. As we saw in the discussion of David's thanksgiving hymn, God promised David that he would have a son called Solomon, and that this son would be the one who would build a new temple. Now the time has come. Following a struggle with Adonijah, another son of David, Solomon is finally appointed king. David speaks to the leaders of the people, telling them to accept Solomon as their king. He then hands over the plan for the building of the Temple to his son. He tells the others present to cooperate with Solomon, and they promise to do so. The people

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[368] See the discussion of Solomon's second prayer at the temple, pp. 165–167.

[369] For a more detailed discussion of the use of this word I refer to the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.

are overjoyed and David gives thanks to God. The next day there are more sacrifices and Solomon is anointed once more.[370]

The story in the first book of Chronicles is essentially the same, though much more elaborate.[371] In 1 Kings the speech David makes, his instructions to Solomon, and the prayer that follows are not present, while the struggle with Adonijah is described, which it is not in 1 Chronicles.[372] Josephus combined material from both sources in his work—the struggle with Adonijah from 1 Kings and the speech and instructions from 1 Chronicles. Only 1 Chronicles has a corresponding prayer (and introductory story), so only that text will be discussed here.

A. *The prayer*

There are several differences between the prayer in *Antiquitates* and the corresponding prayer in Chronicles. The most conspicuous difference is the length: the prayer in *Antiquitates* is much longer than the one in Chronicles. The prayer in Chronicles starts by thanking God in a variety of ways and assigning everything to him. In *Antiquitates* this is paralleled by a series of invocations, which we will discuss later. In Josephus' version typically Jewish expressions, such as 'God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', and the request for Solomon to keep God's commandments are not present.[373] Meanwhile some typically Hellenistic elements have been added, such as calling God 'origin' and especially the nature of the request for Solomon. This is in line with the way Josephus describes Solomon later, as we shall see in the discussion of Solomon's prayers at the dedication of the Temple.

The heart of the Chronicles prayer is the request that the people and Solomon will be loyal and devoted to God. Josephus too has David mention the people and Solomon, but the request is different: David does not ask for loyalty of the people to God, but for 'good things' *for* the people. The request made for Solomon is also more concerned about the requirements of human flourishing than about loyalty to God: not devotion to God on Solomon's part, but that Solomon should be granted a sound and just mind, and virtue (so that he can be a good

[370] AJ 7.335–382.
[371] 1 Chr 22 and 28–29.
[372] 1 Kgs 1.
[373] 1 Chr 29:18–19.

king) is what is asked for. Thus the things asked for in David's prayer in *Antiquitates* are primarily oriented to the earthly needs of people, whereas in 1 Chronicles they are oriented to their relationship with God.

1. *The invocations*

The words Josephus makes David use to call God are successively: πατήρ, γένεσις, δημιουργός, προστάτης and κηδεμών ('father', 'origin', 'creator', 'guardian' and 'protector'). David's invocation consists of three parts (this is again a case in which Josephus uses *tricolon*).[374] The first part of the invocation addresses God in terms of his widest role, as the origin of everything. The second part is directed more at God seen in terms of his relationship to human beings: the God who created human and divine things and adorned himself with them. The third part is exclusively directed at God in terms of his relationship to the Hebrews and their present situation: God as guardian and protector of the Hebrews and their kingdom.

The first invocation is πατήρ τε καὶ γένεσις τῶν ὅλων, 'father and origin of the universe'. As Schlatter has remarked, this combination of 'father' and 'origin' shows that for Josephus the main thought lying behind calling God 'father' is procreation, the bringing forth of children. This would also be the reason for Josephus to combine 'father' and 'lord' on other occasions, because the notion 'lord' in itself implies only dependence on God, not having an origin in God.[375]

It is important here to be clear exactly whose father God is seen as here. As Schlatter says, God is also called Israel's father. However, in this invocation Josephus has a grander conception in mind: the καί in the phrase πατήρ τε καὶ γένεσις has probably to be understood as an *explicativum*, which implies that 'father' has to be read as synonymous with 'origin', and thus belonging to 'universe' as well.[376] (The notion of God as belonging to Israel is expressed in the third invocation "guardian and protector of the Hebrew race".)

Calling God 'father' also occurs in the Old Testament, although not very often (only 15 times), and it indicates God as creator but also

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[374] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, p. 98.

[375] Schlatter, *Wie*, 15.

[376] It is also the combination τε καί that underlines the close connection between 'father' and 'origin'.

as merciful.[377] In the apocrypha and later in the New Testament the expression becomes more frequent.[378] In cases where the epithet is used, God is characterised as father of Israel or of people; the emphasis is on protection and compassion, rather than on procreation.[379] Combining the notion with 'origin', as Josephus does here, indeed suggests that Josephus had in mind "father as origin", especially since the aspect of God is in any case expressed in the third invocation. In the biblical prayer God is not called father.[380]

God as γένεσις, 'origin', is a comparatively rare concept. In the Bible and the apocrypha the use of γένεσις as a designation of God does not occur. In pagan texts the word is not to be found as an attribute of God either. However, the concept of God as origin is well known in Stoicism. The Stoics regarded God as equal with cosmic Nature: Nature is what holds the world together and which causes things on the earth to grow.[381] The Greek word they use for Nature is φύσις, which can also mean 'origin'. As he has done already and does again later, at this point Josephus uses a Stoic concept to characterise God.[382] However, the question can be raised as to why he specifically chose to use the word γένεσις. This is probably because φύσις would have suggested idolatry, nature worship; since Josephus wanted to avoid this, he chose a word with the same core meaning, but without possible idolatrous connotations.

Josephus does not bring in this concept elsewhere in his work, not even in his description of God in CA 2.190–192. Indeed, the only reference to it in Jewish literature that comes close occurs in a fragment of Aristobulus, which says: "Just so has Moses called the whole genesis of the world words of God in our Law; for he continually says in each case 'and God spoke and it came to pass'".[383] This passage does not speak of God himself as origin, but only of the words of God as origin, therefore it is not strictly a parallel to our passage. However, since it explicitly uses the word γένεσις it is interesting to be aware of

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[377] Jeremias, *Abba*, 15–19.

[378] Parallels for the use of πατήρ in the apocrypha: Wis 2:16; 3 Macc 5:7; 6:4, 8; 7:6 and 4 Macc 7:9.

[379] Huffmon, 'Father', 327–328.

[380] For a more detailed discussion of the paternity of God in Jewish writings see Strotmann, *'Mein Vater bist Du'*.

[381] Long, *Hellenistic*, 148.

[382] See especially the discussion of Solomon's prayers at the Temple, pp. 152–171.

[383] Aristobulus, fr. 4, apud Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.3.

it. God as ἀρχή, 'beginning', occurs more often in Jewish literature and represents a similar idea.[384]

In the biblical prayer it is stressed several times that everything comes from God: "everything in heaven and earth is yours".[385] This may have inspired Josephus to his "origin of the universe", but possibly this biblical expression is related rather to Josephus' next invocation.

The first point to make about the second invocation is that there are two possible ways of reading the phrase δημιουργός ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ θείων, οἷς αὐτὸν ἐκόσμησε, 'creator of human and divine things, with which he adorned himself'. The first is that God is the creator of human and divine things, and that he adorned himself with the divine things (only). The alternative possibility is that he adorned himself with both human *and* divine things.

The use of δημιουργός by Josephus has already been treated in the discussion of the invocations in Isaac's blessing.[386] What we need to consider here is the remark that God *adorned* himself with the things he had created. Nowhere else in Josephus' work is the verb κοσμεῖν used with reference to God adorning himself. Of the 56 times the word occurs, 21 times it refers to ornamentation of buildings, vehicles or arms; 16 times to cities, places or streets that are decorated, and 14 times to persons 'decorated' with clothes. Only in five cases is it used in a figurative sense. In Book 7 of *De bello Judaico* Titus commends those who "shed a lustre (κεκοσμηκόσι) on their lives with deeds of gallantry" (BJ 7.11) and further on Josephus writes of Titus, "an emperor adorned (κεκοσμημένον) with the gravity of years and the finest fame for military achievements" (BJ 7.76). Book 3 of *Antiquitates* speaks of Jacob, who was "graced" (ἐκοσμήθη) by the virtues of twelve sons (AJ 3.87). Then there is our passage, and finally, in CA 1.319 Josephus criticises Lysimachus, who writes concerning the name 'Jerusalem' that the city is called after temple robbers (Hierosyla, meaning 'town of temple robbers') and that the actual founders thought to do themselves honour (κοσμήσειν) by so naming it.

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[384] See for example AJ 8.280; CA 2.190; Rev 21:6; 22:13; cf. Van Unnik, *Godspredikaat*.

[385] 1 Chr 29:10.

[386] See pp. 68–69.

Another place in which κοσμεῖν is used in metaphorical way is the third book of Maccabees. In 3 Maccabees 3:5 it is said about the Jewish community that they "adorned their community life with the excellent practice of righteousness". And in 6:1 the high priest Eleazar is described as "a man of distinction among the priests of the country, already well advanced in years and a shining example of all life's virtues (πάσῃ τῇ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀρετῇ κεκοσμημένος)". Most of the examples of a metaphorical use of κοσμεῖν that could be quoted use it in expressions referring to ornate language (words, phrases, discourses or poetry).[387]

It is very likely that Josephus here played upon words: God is creator of the universe, the *kosmos*. And the *kosmos* is God's ornament, with which he adorns himself.

The third invocation is the most narrowly focused of the three: προστάτης τε καὶ κηδεμών γένους τῶν Ἑβραίων καὶ τῆς τούτων εὐδαιμονίας ἧς τε αὐτῷ βασιλείας ἔδωκεν, 'protector and guardian of the Hebrew race, of their happiness[388] and of this kingdom he had given him'. Unlike the first and second invocations, this one relates specifically to the Hebrew people and their present kingdom.

It is not at all usual for God to be called προστάτης.[389] The basic meaning of the word is 'leader' or 'chief'. In the Septuagint, the word occurs only seven times, each time referring to people. In Greek literature, on the other hand, it is much more common. Here again it usually refers to people and is translated as 'leader', 'ruler', or 'administrator', but also as 'one who stands before and protects'. It is also occasionally used as an epithet for a god. In Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, for example, the choir sings, "let the voices of men be one with ours in prayer to the archer-god, Apollo, our defender ('Απόλλω προστάταν)!".[390] Similarly in *Electra* (637) we see Clytaemnestra saying: "O Phoebus[391] our defender (Φοῖβε προστατήριε), may you now listen to my prayer". The

[387] Words: Euripides, *Medea* 576 and Plato, *Apologia* 17c; phrases: Aristophanes, *Ranae* 1005; discourses: Isocrates, *Philippus* 27 and poetry: Thucydides 1.21.1.

[388] See the discussion of Isaac's blessing, pp. 73–74.

[389] The use of the word here recalls David's remark in AJ 7.340, when he gives Solomon the instructions for building the temple and ends his words with "Be brave for you have God as your protector (προστάτης)".

[390] Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 206–209.

[391] Phoebus is one of Apollo's epithets.

word κηδεμών, protector, which occurs only once in the Septuagint, was current in Greek literature. God is also called protector in the Old Testament, but the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew שֹׁמֵר is generally a form of the verb φυλάσσειν; the word that is commonly used for 'leader' (which can also be a translation of προστάτης) is ἄρχων. The words προστάτης and κηδεμών, with which Josephus' David invokes God in the present passage were not inspired by the Jewish source.[392]

According to Attridge the attribute κηδεμών refers to God's care: his πρόνοια.[393] I think this is right, and I incline to include προστάτης in the list of words in the range of 'providence'. The subject of God's providence has been discussed earlier.[394] Mentioning it at this point seems appropriate, since the reason David is now praying is that the promise God made earlier, that his son would become king and would build a temple, is now beginning to be fulfilled. The remainder of the prayer also relates to God's caring for the people.

2. *The requests*

This prayer is especially interesting for its invocations. However, the requests it makes should not remain unmentioned. First Josephus has David ask for 'good things' for the people.[395] The term τὰ ἀγαθά was discussed in the treatment of CA 2.195–197.[396] In David's prayer its meaning seems to connect with the meaning we saw it had in this *Contra Apionem* text, namely the more abstract blessings like 'a good life' and 'good health', and not so much material good things. This chimes with the non-material request David makes for Solomon.

Asking for a sound and just mind for Solomon is in line with the idea of Solomon's wisdom, which we shall come to later.[397] In the biblical prayer David asks for Solomon to have a pious heart, dedicated to God. Josephus, knowing of Solomon's proverbial wisdom and wanting

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[392] The words occur one more time in combination: when Moses leaves the Israelites behind in the desert for the second time, to ascend Mount Sinai, the people are in deep distress, because they "imagine themselves to have been bereft of a patron and protector (προστάτου δὲ ἠρημῶσθαι καὶ κηδεμόνος)", AJ 3.98.

[393] Attridge, *Interpretation*, 72.

[394] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.

[395] Once more this is a prayer in which the petitioner does not ask favours for himself, but for other people. See pp. 245–248.

[396] See pp. 42–43.

[397] See the discussion of Solomon's prayers at the Temple, p. 155.

to give expression to this, changed the request into one for a sound and just mind. As Feldman remarks Josephus made a great effort to stress Solomon's wisdom.[398] Parallel to the present passage in this respect is AJ 8.23, where in his sleep Solomon is given the opportunity to ask gifts of God. He asks God for a sound spirit and good understanding (νοῦν ὑγιῆ καὶ φρόνησιν ἀγαθήν), whereas in the biblical text he only asks for an understanding heart. In total Josephus used the word ὑγιής 10 times. In all cases the meaning is as it is in AJ 7.381 and 8.23: sound, good, ingenuous.

The virtuous qualities are also an addition by Josephus, and seem to refer to the qualities a good man was supposed to have in Josephus' days. Both the virtuous qualities and the sound and just mind for Solomon are expressions of Josephus' wish to depict Solomon as a good and wise man. To do this he used the terms available to him from his cultural milieu. In his time good people were thought of as men possessing the cardinal virtues, these being wisdom (σοφία), courage (ἀνδρεία), temperance (σωφροσύνη) and justice (δικαιοσύνη). At a later stage piety (εὐσέβεια) was also added to this list.[399] In this prayer God is asked explicitly to bestow two of these virtues: wisdom (here διάνοια) and justice. The other virtues are summarised in the third part: all other elements of virtue.[400]

Earlier statements made by David to Solomon also mention some of these virtuous qualities. In 7.338, where David tells Solomon that he will have to build the new temple, he says: "Since (…) you were chosen by God to be king, endeavour to be worthy of his providence by being pious, just and brave"; and in 356, he gives Solomon instructions concerning the kingdom "in order that he might rule with piety and justice". Solomon is evidently one of the persons Josephus describes in Hellenistic terms.[401]

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[398] Feldman, *Josephus's*, 579.

[399] These virtues are already mentioned by Plato, *Protagoras* 349b and *Respublica* 427e.

[400] Plato uses about the same expression in *Respublica* 536a: "With reference to sobriety and bravery and loftiness of soul and all the other parts of virtue (καὶ πάντα τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς μέρη), we must be especially on our guard (…)"

[401] For more information of Josephus' use of the (cardinal) virtues, see Feldman *Josephus's*, 96–129.

XVIII. Solomon at the Temple: AJ 8.107–108 & 8.111–117[402]

(106) (…) Solomon arose—for he chanced to be seated—and addressed God in words which he considered suitable to the divine nature and fitting for him to speak: (107) "Because, O Lord," he said, "we know that you have an eternal dwelling in those things which you created for yourself—in the heaven and air and earth and sea, all of which you fill, without being contained by them, (108) I have built this temple called after you, so that from it we may send up prayers into the air to you when sacrificing and seeking good omens, and may ever be persuaded that you are present and not far removed. For, as you see all things and hear all things, you do not, even now that you live where it is right for you, leave off being very near to all men, but rather you are present with everyone who asks for guidance, both by night and by day."

(111) "Not by deeds is it for people possible to return thanks to God for the benefits they have received; for God does not need all those things, and he is above any such recompense. But with that, O Lord, through which we have been made superior to other creatures by you [i.e. the gift of speech], with which it is necessary to praise your greatness and give thanks for the things that are property of our house and the Hebrew people. (112) For with what other thing is it better for us to appease someone who is wrathful and ill-willed, than with the voice, which we have from the air, and which we know to ascend through this [i.e. the air] again? With it [i.e. my voice] I render my thanks to you, first for my father, whom you brought up from obscurity to such glory, (113) and next for myself, because unto the present day you have done all that you have foretold. And I ask you henceforth to grant the people that are esteemed by you whatever a god has power to, and to increase our house forever, as you promised David, my father, both in lifetime and at the end, [saying] that the kingship would remain among us and that this offspring would transmit it to numberless successors. So grant us these things and give to my sons the virtue in which you rejoice. (114) Beside these things I entreat you also to send a part of your spirit to live in the temple, in order that you seem to be on earth with us. For to you the whole vault of heaven and everything in it is but a small habitation, let alone this ordinary temple. Nevertheless I beg you to guard it and keep it unravaged by enemies as your own for ever and to watch over it as your own property. (115) And if ever the people sins, and then because of its sin is hit by some evil from you, by unfruitfulness of the earth and

[402] The discussion of these prayers was published in an earlier version, entitled: 'Two Prayers by King Solomon in Josephus' *Antiquities* 8 and the Bible', in: F. Siegert, J.U. Kalms (eds.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Paris 2001* (MJSt 12), Münster 2002, 72–89.

> pestilential destruction or any of such misfortune, with which you visit them who transgress any of the sacred laws, and if the whole people takes refuge gathering in the temple, entreating and praying you to be saved, may you then—while giving ear to it as if you were within—have pity and deliver it from its misfortunes. (116) I ask that this help of yours be not only for the Hebrews who will err, but also for people coming from the ends of the earth or from wherever, who turn to you and persist in beseeching you to take part in your goodness, then give them that you are hearing. (117) For may everyone thus know that you yourself wanted us to build this house for you with us, and that we are not inhumane by nature and that we are not hostile to those who are not of the same race, but that we want all to have common help from you and advantage of the good things."

A. *Synopsis of the story*

Table 1 on the following page displays the differences and similarities in the narratives between *Antiquitates* and the biblical texts. The table shows that it is difficult to draw any conclusions as to which text Josephus used directly as his source. At the beginning of the story, he seems to follow 1 Kings, but later he seems closer to 2 Chronicles. Considering the minor differences with 2 Chronicles and the greater differences with 1 Kings, I think it most likely that he used 2 Chronicles. However, in so far as the content of the prayers in both texts is concerned, there is not much difference between 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. They only differ in some minor details, for which there are no parallels in Josephus. I do not think, therefore, that it will be necessary to deal with these texts separately. Thus, when I refer to the prayers in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, I will simply refer to them as the biblical prayer. Only at the very end of the biblical prayers is there a more important divergence, but when I come to discuss the elements in question, I will explicitly indicate which text I mean.

It should be noted that the first prayer in the biblical text is very short and contains only one verse, whereas the corresponding prayer in *Antiquitates* consists of almost two sections.[403] Moreover, on examining the second prayer we see that Josephus actually shortened it, so that we may justifiably conclude that he probably tried to make the two prayers resemble each other more than they do in the biblical text.

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[403] In Niese's numbering.

Table 1

1 Kings 8	*Antiquitates 8*	*2 Chronicles (5+)6*
priests bring the ark into the temple	priests bring the ark into the temple	priests bring the ark into the temple
		they praise the Lord
a cloud enters the temple	a cloud enters the temple	a cloud enters the temple
first prayer by Solomon	*first prayer by Solomon*	first prayer by Solomon
address to the people	address to the people	address to the people
		description of the chair before the altar
second prayer by Solomon	*second prayer by Solomon*	second prayer by Solomon
	Solomon falls to the ground and does obeisance	
Solomon blesses the people		
	preparation of the sacrifice	
	a fire from heaven	a fire from heaven
		the glory of God fills the temple
	the people know God is in the temple	the people know God is in the temple
	kneeling and obeisance	kneeling and praise
	Solomon praises God and urges the people to do so	
further sacrifices	further sacrifices	further sacrifices
		the priests praise God
seven-day feast	seven-day feast	seven-day feast

B. *The first prayer*

1. *Solomon portrayed as a philosopher*

The first thing that strikes us when we read the text in *Antiquitates* is the manner in which Josephus announces Solomon's prayer: "Solomon arose (…) and addressed God in words which he considered suitable to the divine nature and fitting for him to speak".

Solomon is characterised here as a philosopher: a philosopher who considers whether his words are suitable to the nature of the divinity: τῇ θείᾳ φύσει πρέποντας.[404] Later I will discuss this way of speaking about and thinking of God, but for the moment it is important to note that it is characteristic of philosophers. In CA 2.168 Josephus discusses Greek philosophers, such as Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato and the Stoics, who all said that the principles of Moses are suitable to the nature and majesty of God, so it was obviously a philosophical requirement to consider the appropriateness of words used to or about God (τὸ θεοπρεπές).

The wisdom of Solomon was a commonplace in Jewish thought. In the Graeco-Roman period, wise men were considered to be philosophers; Josephus must therefore have regarded Solomon as a philosopher. The content of the two prayers that follow being markedly philosophical, it is quite possible that Josephus wrote in philosophical terms to underline Solomon's wisdom. Moreover, Solomon is not the only biblical character Josephus presents as a philosopher: Abraham and Moses are presented in the same way.[405]

2. *God's dwelling place*

Let us now turn to the text of the prayer itself, which occupies a single line in the biblical source. It starts with a reference to the dark cloud that has just entered the temple. Solomon says that the Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud. Josephus does not repeat what Solomon said about darkness or the dark cloud at all, although he does refer to the entry of the cloud in *Antiquitates*. It is even possible that this is because Solomon's statement that God said that he wanted to live in a dark cloud is nowhere to be found in the Bible or in *Antiquitates*, and that Josephus did not want to refer to something that had not in fact been mentioned before.

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[404] Concerning θεία φύσις, cf. 2 Pet 1:4.
[405] Feldman, 'Mikra', 499.

The biblical prayer says: "I have built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever". But Josephus takes the opportunity to include some philosophy and makes Solomon start by saying: "we know that you have an eternal dwelling in those things which you created for yourself—in the heaven and air and earth and sea, all of which you fill, without being contained by them".

Let us start with the place where God is supposed to live. In the biblical text only heaven is mentioned as the place where God dwells and then only in the long prayer, which says, "hear from heaven, your dwelling place".[406] As we see, only heaven is said to be God's dwelling place, but Josephus extends it to the four elements: heaven, air, earth and sea. The thought that God lives in all those places is obviously not a biblical one. The common biblical concept is that God lives in heaven, as indeed we see in the long prayer in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. We also find it, for example, in Deuteronomy 26:15, where it says, "Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place", and Psalm 33:13–14, "From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth".[407] The other place in which God is said in the Bible to live is, of course, the temple or the tabernacle. Instances where the temple is called the house of God are Exodus 23:19, where among the descriptions of the sacrifice it says, "Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God", and Psalm 66:13: "I will come to your house with burnt offerings and fulfil my vows to you".

Josephus, however, has further thoughts on where God lives. The four dwelling places he mentions obviously represent the four elements, στοιχεῖα, that are well known in Greek philosophy: fire, air, earth and water. In this passage, heaven represents the element 'fire'. Many images of heaven are accompanied by the vision of fire; Elijah, for instance, goes up to heaven in a chariot of fire with horses of fire;[408] in Genesis 19:24, God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah by means of fire and sulphur from heaven, and in 2 Kings 1:10 Elijah asks for a fire to come down from heaven to consume a captain and his men, in order to prove that Elijah really is a man of God.[409]

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[406] 1 Kgs 8:30; 2 Chr 6:21.
[407] See also: Ps 11:4.
[408] 2 Kgs 2:11.
[409] See also Exod 9:23.

Another passage where Josephus uses the concept of the elements is that in which he describes the tabernacle and the priests' vestments, which Moses made in the desert at God's command. In AJ 3.180 he writes, "In fact, every one of these objects [i.e. the tabernacle, the vestments and the vessels for sacred ministry] is intended to recall and represent the universe". In 183 he describes the tapestries that are woven of four materials which denote the natural elements (στοιχεῖα): "the fine linen appears to typify the earth (…), the purple the sea (…), the air must be indicated by the blue and the crimson will be the symbol of fire". This distinctly philosophical description of the sacred items does not come from the biblical source, Exodus 26.[410]

3. *Pan(en)theism*

Josephus has more to say about God's dwelling place: "(heaven, air, earth and sea,) all of which you fill, without being contained by them". Combined with the reference to the four elements, this is another typical example of philosophical thinking about where God is supposed to live. The Stoics believe in a cosmic principle that shapes and moves all things, a principle that was also referred to as God. This principle is immanent in everything. Stoicism says that nature, the logos, the soul of the world and God are all one and the same thing.[411] As Cleanthes, quoted by Cicero, says: "the cosmos itself is God".[412]

However, Josephus appears to go further than this: he says that God fills his whole creation, but that he is not contained by it (οὐδὲ ἀρκούμενος). It is interesting to see how Josephus uses the word ἀρκούμενος here. The verb ἀρκεῖν means 'to be a match', 'to suffice'. When Josephus says that creation is no match for God to live in or that God is contained by none of the things he created, he must mean that God goes beyond all things. God and the things he created do not coincide, but God transcends it all. Does this also mean that God is greater than all things and that all things are *in* God? If so, Josephus may be said to have a panentheistic worldview: 'all in God'. Panentheism lies between Theism ('the world is outside God') and Pantheism ('God and the world are one'): in Panentheism there is a close connection

[410] See also Philo, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* 2.85 and *De vita Mosis* 2.88, where the colours of the tapestries are also specified in this way.

[411] Long, *Hellenistic*, 147–150.

[412] Cleanthes, apud Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.14.37.

between God and the world, but they are not one and the same: all things are in God.[413]

Philo is more explicit in his *De sobrietate* 63: "But God is to inhabit a house not in the sense of dwelling in a particular place, for he contains all things and is contained by none, but in the sense that his special providence watches over and takes care of that spot".[414] His statement that God contains all things and that thus all things are in God is obviously panentheistic. However, Solomon's prayer in *Antiquitates* lacks the first statement that God contains all things, and it does not therefore go without saying that Josephus is panentheistic in this prayer, although it is possible that the combination of filling all things and not being contained by them implies that all things are in God.

In saying that God 'fills all the things' he created, Josephus expresses his view in Stoic terms.[415] However, by adding that God is 'not contained' by his creation and thus goes beyond it, he seems to supplement or even correct the Stoic pantheistic conception. It seems possible that Josephus is presenting the biblical idea of God's omnipresence in rather awkward Greek, in both Stoic and non-Stoic language.

4. *Reasons for building the temple*

Solomon goes on to give the reasons why he built the temple: "I have built this temple called after you, so that from it we may, when sacrificing and seeking good omens, send up prayers into the air to you, and may ever be persuaded that you are present and not far removed".

Josephus may have felt that the statement in the second biblical prayer, "I have built the temple for the name of the Lord", was too vague and therefore explained that the temple had been called after God.

In the biblical text, the only reason given for the building of the temple is that it is a place for God to dwell forever. Josephus' text does not mention this reason for building it. Only at the end of the prayer do we see that Solomon says, "now that you have a suitable house". Josephus and the biblical writers seem to agree that the new temple is a (new) house for God, but the purpose of the house is not explained in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, as it is in *Antiquitates*.

In our prayer text in *Antiquitates*, three reasons are given for building the temple: first, as a place from which to send up prayers into the

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[413] Macquarrie, 'Panentheism', 611.
[414] Philo, *De sobrietate* 63.
[415] See also the section below on the voice 'in the air' and *pneuma*.

air; second, for sacrificing and seeking good omens; third, to prove to people that God is always present and not far away. We will discuss these points in greater detail.

Firstly, 'prayer and sacrifice'. We shall come back later to the subject of sending prayers into the air when discussing the second prayer and the statement about the voice, but here I want to point out that Josephus refers to the temple as a house of prayer. This was a common Jewish idea, expressed in Isaiah 56:7, for example, which Jesus quoted in the synoptic gospels when he drove the money changers and merchants out of the temple.[416] The prayers in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles also show that the temple was for praying.

However, it is Josephus who combines sacrifice and prayer: the source text only mentions prayer and supplication. Prayers accompanying sacrifice must have been instituted in temple practice later in history, as the practice is not mentioned in the Torah.[417]

Besides prayer, Solomon also refers to asking for good omens: καλλιερεῖν. The word καλλιερεῖν is often used by Greek authors to mean 'to receive favourable signs in a sacrifice' or 'to ask for good omens'. The word is regarded by some as having a pagan connotation;[418] however, considering the other passages where Josephus uses it, I do not think that it should necessarily be seen as showing a pagan influence.

In four of the six places where καλλιερεῖν occurs in Josephus' work, it is said or done by Jews: twice by the Jewish people,[419] on one occasion by priests by order of King Hezekiah[420] and in this passage, by Solomon. The other two passages are in fact references to pagan rituals: the first time καλλιερεῖν is performed by Vespasian and Titus after the triumphal procession into Rome and the execution of Simon son of Gioras;[421] the second time occurs in a decree of king Antiochus III concerning the temple and Jerusalem.[422] Feldman uses the fact that the word occurs in this pagan decree as proof that the word has pagan connotations. However, Philo also used the word twice, in the sense of

[416] Matt 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46.
[417] See pp. 33–36 and 243–245.
[418] Feldman, *Josephus'*, 622.
[419] AJ 9.271; 10.64.
[420] AJ 9.268.
[421] BJ 7.155.
[422] AJ 12.146.

'having good signs' and 'sanctifying'. In *De agricultura* 127 he writes: "a divine intimation was made to him (Cain) not to be confident that his offering had met with God's favour", in other words, he did not receive good signs following his offering, showing that God was pleased. In another instance, *De somniis* 1.243, he uses the word καλλιερεῖν for people 'sanctifying' their lives to God. Since both Philo and Josephus used the word to refer to Jewish cases, we may conclude that the word was also in use among Jews for their own cultic activities.

According to Solomon, the temple is a kind of 'proof' that God is near: "I have built this temple (…) so that (…) we may ever be persuaded that you are present and not far removed". Further on he writes: "you do not (…) leave off being very near to all men, but rather you are present with everyone who asks for guidance, both by night and by day". A parallel to the thought of God's nearness is to be found in Acts, in the Areopagus speech, which says that God "is not far from each one of us".[423]

Josephus continues: "you see all things and hear all things". This comment that God sees everything and hears everything appears to indicate that Josephus was in agreement with the doctrine that God is omniscient. According to Norden, this sentence is derived from a verse in a prayer by Agamemnon to Zeus and the sun in Homer's *Iliad*: (ἠελιός θ') ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις.[424] Josephus would have known this verse because Heraclitus the Stoic discussed it in his *Quaestiones Homericae* 23.[425] Although the possibility cannot be ruled out, I do not think it is necessarily the only possible explanation; there are other authors who described God as being all-seeing and all-hearing. We encountered a similar idea in Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, where Moses says, "For neither what is done, nor what is thought is hidden from you"; God is thus all-knowing, as Solomon also says here. As we commented earlier, Josephus uses the idea at least four times, so presumably he took it for granted.[426]

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[423] Acts 17:27.

[424] Homer, *Ilias* 3.277: '(sun), who looks upon all things and hears all things' (my translation).

[425] Norden, *Agnostos*, 19 n. 2.

[426] For a discussion of God's omniscience see the discussion of Moses outside Datham's tent, pp. 117–118.

From the words Josephus attributed to Solomon, it follows that he obviously believes that God is omnipresent. God lives in the whole universe and is near to everyone, both by day and by night, and he sees and hears all things. The temple was built in order to convince people of all that, as a kind of symbol. This is closely related to a subject that arises in the second prayer, where Josephus says that God does not need anything and where he denies the necessity of sacrificial practice. The initial purpose of the temple as the place in which to make offerings is thus also denied, and the temple has become a symbol of the presence of God.

C. *The second prayer*

1. *The Introduction: Words not deeds*

In the second prayer at the scene of the temple dedication, Josephus introduces an interesting feature concept, which is obviously not derived from the Bible: He has Solomon speak about thanking God, saying,

> Not by deeds is it possible for men to return thanks to God (…) for God does not need all those things, and he is above any such recompense. But with that (…) through which we have been made superior to other creatures by you [i.e. the gift of speech], with which it is necessary to praise your greatness and give thanks for the things that are property of our house and the Hebrew people. For with what other thing is it better for us to appease someone (…) than with the voice, which we have from the air, and which we know to ascend through this again.

In short: 'We should not thank God with deeds, but with words'.

Some authorities have said that, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, prayer and praise became substitutes for sacrifice, an idea that had already taken root before 70 in Qumran.[427] If so, the present passage would mirror this situation.

There is, however, another possibility. We also find the idea of giving preference to words over deeds in giving thanks in the writings of Philo. In *De plantatione* 126 he writes: "But it is not possible genuinely to express our gratitude to God by means of buildings and oblations and sacrifices, as is the custom of most people (…). Nay, it must be expressed by means of hymns of praise (…)". Further on he writes that people should thank God with "boons", because everything that one

[427] Klinzing, *Umdeutung*, 22–28.

would like to give God, is already his. Therefore, people should honour and thank God always and everywhere, "using voice and skilful pen".[428] So thanking God with praise was not something new in Josephus' day: Philo was already familiar with the idea.

In Greek religion, too, praise was a proper way to thank God, although prayers of gratitude are not very common in classical Greek literature: usually, prayers accompany a sacrifice.[429] Versnel sheds an interesting light on it when he says that people thanked God with the fruits of their work; peasants and craftsmen with part of their products, and artists, scholars and authors with part of theirs. Moreover, he says, it became customary for rich people to hire professional specialists to write their thanksgiving for them (sometimes by order of the gods).[430]

Van Unnik suggests that with this idea of words rather than deeds Josephus and Philo are linked to the development of the Greek philosophy of religion towards wordless prayer.[431] An exact parallel for Philo's and Josephus' remarks is hard to find, but it is certainly something to look into in a future study. Other elements of Josephus' passage are to be found in Stoic thinking, as we shall see in the following sections.

2. *Ἀπροσδεής*

Josephus writes that God is ἀπροσδεής, which means 'without need of anything'. This is a Stoic attribute of God. As Harding says, the term denies the justness of the well-known concept of a prayer as a contract: the *do-ut-des* principle: 'I give, in order that you give'.[432] This was a common theme in sacrificial practice.[433]

Another commonly held idea was that a sacrifice was made to support God or the gods: to give them food. But Josephus denies both views, saying that God does not need anything: he is ἀπροσδεής. This term is derived from Greek philosophy; ever since Xenophanes, gods have been described as possessing certain qualities that are denoted as 'godworthy' or 'suitable to God': *dignum deo* or θεοπρεπές. This is closely related to an idea expressed in Josephus' introduction to Solomon's prayer: the use of words considered suitable to the deity. Xenophanes introduced

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[428] Philo, *De plantatione* 130–131.
[429] Pulleyn, *Prayer*, 39.
[430] Versnel, 'Religious', 55–56. See also the section on hymns (pp. 140–142).
[431] Van Unnik, 'Eine merkwürdige', 368.
[432] Harding, 'Making', 63.
[433] Van der Leeuw, 'Die do-ut-des-Formel', 252.

this concept as a reaction to Homer and Hesiod, who, according to him, were much too anthropomorphic in their portrayal of the gods. According to him, Homer wrote about deeds and sayings of gods who also failed to act as gods. Yet Xenophanes wished only to speak of a *true* god; he said that only if a god acted in a truly god-like manner, only if he acted in a way that was suitable for a god, could he be called a god: no creature that does not act in a way that is appropriate to a god, can be called a god.[434]

Since Xenophanes' day, any discussion of what was suitable to a god made use of attributes such as 'eternal' or 'constant'. However, in the Hellenistic and Roman age, more emphasis came to be placed upon an indirect approach. The gods were described in terms that negated aspects considered 'unworthy of a god': in terms of what they were *not*; so they were 'not temporal' and 'not variable', as opposed to 'eternal' and 'constant'. The expression ἀπροσδεής, not in need of anything, is another of these aspects. The word can refer to Stoics themselves, as well as to God. The Stoic ideal is to be free of any emotions or desires: to be ἀπροσδεής. This was therefore considered to be an attribute of God as well.

Philo uses the word only three times; two instances are in the context of an inner human power, that gives a man the capacity to be "in no need of anything", thereby making life "calm and tranquil";[435] neither refers to God. The third instance, *De agricultura* 54, does not speak of God either, but it comes close, saying: "but if a soul is governed by God, having that one and only thing on which all other things depend, it is very naturally in no need of other things".

In the Letter of Aristeas, the word ἀπροσδεής occurs once: one of the guests of Ptolemy II answers the king when he asks for the definition of kingship. He says that kingship is real self-mastery and compares it to God: "God likewise does not want anything and is yet merciful".[436] Moreover, in the entire Septuagint, the word ἀπροσδεής occurs only twice in connection with God, both in works that were, like the Letter of Aristeas, originally composed in Greek. The first passage is in 2 Maccabees in the prayer of the priests after Nicanor has asked for Judas to be delivered. The priests call on God, saying: "O Lord of all, who has

[434] Dreyer, *Untersuchungen*, 22–23.
[435] Philo, *De Abrahamo* 30; *Quod deus sit mmutabilis* 56.
[436] Let. Aris. 211.

need of nothing".[437] And the second passage is in 3 Maccabees, when King Ptolemy IV has entered the temple; Simon, the high priest, calls on God in his prayer: "You chose this city and sanctified this temple for your name, though you lack nothing at all".[438]

The word ἀπροσδεής does not occur in the New Testament, but the idea is present in Acts 17:25, which denies the opposite; it says that God "is not served by human hands, as though he needed anything (προσδεόμενος)". The first letter of Clement does contain the word itself: "The Lord, brethren, stands in need of nothing; and he desires nothing of anyone, except that confession be made to him".[439]

Apparently there are few instances in Jewish literature of God being called ἀπροσδεής. However, since the word is used in the Septuagint and the Letter of Aristeas, the conclusion has to be that although the expression was not common in Judaism, Josephus was not the only Jewish writer to use the word.

Josephus is clearly familiar with the idea that God does not need anything, for there is another passage where he says something similar.[440] In CA 2.190, Josephus describes God as part of his exposition of the law. He says that God is αὐτάρκης, 'sufficient in himself'. Obviously this expresses the same idea: God does not need anything; he provides for himself.

3. *The voice 'into the air'*

If God does not need anything, then the right way to thank God, according to the words attributed to Solomon, is not through deeds but through praise. And praising is done with one's voice.[441] It is the voice that distinguishes man from animals. This idea also derives from Greek philosophy: Aristotle had said previously that speech and reason are what make humans into higher beings than animals and plants.[442] Josephus may well have been familiar with this idea and used it in writing Solomon's prayer.

This voice people "have from the air", and they know the voice also "ascends through this air". In the Stoa, the voice is seen as 'smitten air'.

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[437] 2 Macc 14:35.
[438] 3 Macc 2:9.
[439] 1 Clem 52:1.
[440] The word ἀπροσδεής occurs one more time in Josephus' work, in AJ 3.45, where it refers to the Hebrew people, who should see themselves, according to Moses, as an army, "great and lacking nothing".
[441] See also Sir 51:22.
[442] Aristotle, *De anima* 2.414b.15; 415 a.5; *De generatione animalum* 5.786b.20.

Zeno spoke of φωνή as ἀὴρ πεπληγμένος,[443] and Chrysippus called it: πληγὴ ἀέρος.[444] Thinking of the voice as being air may be the source of Josephus' idea of the voice that comes from the air and ascends through it, and the idea that prayers can be sent into the air.

As we saw earlier, in Stoic philosophy, air is regarded as one of the four elements; together with fire it forms the *pneuma*. Everything that exists consists of two 'principles': active and passive. *Pneuma* is the active principle. The active principle is what moves and shapes the universe and holds it together. The passive principle is called 'matter', and is completely indeterminate; it can only be shaped and moved by the active principle, the *pneuma*. This *pneuma* can manifest itself in different forms of life. It has a 'tension', which is some kind of inner movement because of its two different components, fire (hot) and air (cold). The kind of life depends on the degree of tension.[445]

'Air' is thus a very important part of Stoic cosmology; it is part of the active principle that moves and shapes the universe. The thought that the voice comes from the air and ascends through it is a logical development. As we saw, Stoics referred to the voice as 'smitten air' and Josephus closely follows them in this respect.

4. *Thanking God*

After this philosophical introduction about how and with what to thank God, Solomon proceeds to thank him. He offers thanks "first for my father, whom you brought up from obscurity to such glory, and next for myself, because unto the present day you have done all that you have foretold". These two elements are not to be found in the biblical prayer, in which Solomon only offers thanks for the promises God made to his father, and for fulfilling those promises. However, in the prayer in *Antiquitates*, Solomon speaks of promises made to himself and fulfilled. In view of the fact that Josephus later refers to promises made to Solomon's father David we may conclude that the two things for which he thanks God in this passage have been added by Josephus.

Josephus made this particular addition once before. In AJ 7.95 David prays to God to thank him for raising him up "from the humble station of a shepherd to so great a height of power and glory".[446] The biblical

[443] SVF 1.21.
[444] SVF 2.40.
[445] Long, *Hellenistic*, 152–158, 171.
[446] See the discussion of David's thanksgiving hymn, pp. 143–144.

parallel version of that prayer does not mention this, either. The theme of David's humble origin, however, does have its source in the Bible. In 2 Samuel 7:8 we see God saying to Nathan: "Tell my servant David: 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel'." Josephus does not use these words in his rendering of God's speech to Nathan, but refers to them about three sections later, in David's thanksgiving hymn. Josephus appears to feel that it was more appropriate for David (and later Solomon) to thank God for raising him up, than it was for God to remind David that he had done so.

5. *Petition for the family*

Having thanked God, Solomon starts his petition. First he has some practical requests on behalf of his family: "I ask you henceforth to grant the people that are esteemed by you whatever a god has power to, and to increase our house forever, as you promised David". Who exactly these people are who are esteemed by God is not very clear. In any case, this is not a literal rendering of Solomon's biblical prayer, although he does say, "you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way".[447] Whether Josephus had this statement in mind when he wrote this prayer is not clear, yet considering the order of the content it is likely that he did, for the promise to David which follows, namely, to increase his house, occurs in both *Antiquitates* and the biblical prayers.

"Increase our house forever, as you promised David, my father". This is a promise that God has indeed made: in Nathan's vision or dream in AJ 7.93, God promised that David would have a son, and that his children's children would stay on the throne forever. When Nathan tells David, he is very grateful and he thanks God with a hymn.[448] It is obvious that this speech by God, and David's thanksgiving hymn that follows, are closely related to Solomon's prayer. Given the fact that the situations are connected, this is not surprising: in the speech, God promises David that his son will be allowed to build a temple for God; in the answering prayer, David thanks God for that promise. Since at this point in the story the temple has actually been built as God promised, it is logical for Solomon to refer to that promise.

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[447] 1 Kgs 8:23, 2 Chr 6:14.

[448] See the discussion of David's thanksgiving hymn, pp. 140–142.

For the last few words of section 113, we do not have a parallel in the biblical text: "give to my sons the virtue in which you rejoice". The biblical text does in fact refer to David's deathbed speech to his son:[449] "You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done".[450] Yet Solomon does not ask for God's help with that. It was Josephus who included that request in the prayer.

6. *A part of the spirit*

These words actually refer back to the first prayer: Solomon entreats God "to send a part of your spirit to live in the temple, in order that you seem to be on earth with us". At first sight, this seems a strange thing to say. The first prayer said that God lived in everything. But here Solomon asks God to send a part of his spirit to live in the temple.

According to John Levison, asking to send a part of the spirit provides an answer to a dilemma of which Josephus was aware: "On the one hand, he will forfeit his credibility amongst his Jewish clientele if he denies God's presence in the temple. On the other hand, he cannot fully affirm God's presence in the temple in a history written under Roman patronage for a readership responsible for the temple's destruction".[451] However, in my view, Josephus' dilemma must have been quite different: for the Jews the temple was the house of God,[452] but how could Josephus portray Solomon as asking God to come and live in the temple, while only a few sections earlier he had stated that God does not live in one fixed place? This is why I think he formulated the request in this way. He had already made a similar reference in the first prayer, in which he said: "you do not, even now that you live where it is right for you, leave off being very near to all men".[453] A part of God or his spirit may be in the temple, but in fact he is everywhere.

The word used here for 'spirit' is the word πνεῦμα (*pneuma*) which, as I said earlier, has strong Stoic connotations. As we saw earlier, the Stoics believed that *pneuma* is that which penetrates the whole universe.

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[449] 1 Kgs 2:4.
[450] 1 Kgs 8:25, 2 Chr 6:16.
[451] Levison, 'Josephus', 240.
[452] See the exposition earlier about the place where God is supposed to live, pp. 155–157.
[453] AJ 8.108.

And *pneuma* may also be called God. However, πνεῦμα is also commonly used in both the New Testament and the Septuagint, where it is most of the time a translation of the Hebrew word רוּחַ. Which meaning Josephus had in mind we will never know, although I think that he himself did not consider them to be two different things.

7. *God seems to be on earth*

At this point in the biblical text Solomon poses the question: "But will God really dwell on earth with men?"[454] The answer comes a few verses later: God's *name* will live in the temple. However, as we said earlier, this is hard to imagine. Josephus therefore appears to answer this question differently, by asking God to send a part of his spirit in order that "you seem to be on earth with man". God *seems* to be on earth: this again is a Stoic concept. Josephus had already used this concept twice, some sections earlier, before the start of the prayer; first, when the ark is brought in and the people smell the sweet odour of the incense burning, Josephus writes: "this was a sign of God's being present and dwelling—according to human belief (δόξα)—in the place which had been newly built and consecrated to him".[455] And second, when he wrote that seeing the dark cloud entering the temple "produced with the priests the *impression and belief* that God had descended into the temple".[456]

The words used for 'impression' and 'belief' are φαντασία and δόξα. In the present passage, the related word δοκείν is used. Both φαντασία and δόξα are characteristic words used by the Stoics in expounding their theory of knowledge. Before knowing anything, one must have an 'impression', φαντασία; this 'impression' is then interpreted by 'thought'.[457] However, δόξα is an erroneous way of knowing: "knowledge subsists only in the wise, and opinion (δόξα) only in the fools".[458] In effect Josephus ranges the priests and the people on the side of the fools, whereas Solomon and other wise people know that God does not really, physically dwell in the temple. This is in line with section 115, where Solomon asks God to listen to the people "*as if* you were within".

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[454] 1 Kgs 8:27; 2 Chr 6:18.
[455] AJ 8.102.
[456] AJ 8.106.
[457] Diogenes Laertius, 7.49.
[458] Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus dogmaticos* 1.151.

8. *The temple*
The following statement can also be found in the biblical source: "the whole vault of heaven and everything in it is but a small habitation, let alone this ordinary temple". In particular, there is a reference to this tiny, ordinary temple in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles: "But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"[459] This biblical statement fitted Josephus' thinking very well, so he could easily use the sentence.

Nevertheless, although God is not really inside the temple, Solomon asks God "to guard the temple and keep it unravaged by enemies as your own for ever and to watch over it as your own property". This element in the prayer is rather mysterious: Josephus puts a prayer in Solomon's mouth, knowing that it will not be fulfilled: Josephus is of course aware of the fact that the temple to which he is referring was in fact destroyed some 400 years after Solomon by the Babylonians and, maybe even more important, again in his own days by the Romans. Why Josephus nevertheless has Solomon make the request is not clear. In the biblical text there is a wish, "May your eyes be open to this Temple day and night"; it is possible that this is what prompted Josephus. However, the biblical context suggests a different meaning: keep your ears tuned so that you may hear the prayers people say. The explicit request Josephus writes about watching over the Temple and keeping it unravaged by enemies has no parallel in the biblical text.

9. *Listen to the people*
The following is a long passage in which Solomon asks God to listen to the people: "if ever the people sins, (…) and if the whole people takes refuge gathering in the temple, entreating and praying you to be saved". He also says how the people will be punished then: it will be "hit by some evil from you, by unfruitfulness of the earth and pestilential destruction or any of such misfortune, with which you visit them who transgress any of the sacred laws".

The biblical text mentions a few cases in which people have been punished by God, and then turn to him, but they are elaborated upon in greater detail there, case by case, in a kind of fixed formula, always ending with the same words: Solomon asks God to listen to the

[459] 1 Kgs 8:27, 2 Chr 6:18.

people.[460] Josephus takes all those cases together. We have already seen that Josephus was probably trying to bring the two prayers more in line with each other as to length. This was probably a suitable place for him to shorten the prayer.

When God delivers them, this help should not only come to the Hebrew people, but also to "people coming from the ends of the earth or from wherever, who turn to you and persist in beseeching you to take part in your goodness". This has been taken directly from the biblical text, which says: "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven (…)".[461] Moreover, since the last section is about not hating foreigners, as we will see in the next paragraph, this was a very appropriate introductory passage for Josephus to borrow.

10. *Not hating foreigners*

The last section is an apologetic one: Josephus says that the Jewish people are not misanthropic: that they are friendly to non-Jews as well. "For may everyone thus know (…) that we are not inhumane by nature and that we are not hostile to those who are not of the same race, but that we want all to have common help from you and advantage of the good things". As we all know, towards the end of his life Josephus wrote the apologetic work *Contra Apionem*, which contains a rebuttal of the accusation that Jews hate foreigners.[462] Apparently this was a common notion in the first century, and Josephus felt very much attacked by that.

The end of the prayer in the Bible differs in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. 2 Chronicles ends once more with the request to come to the temple and listen to the prayers of the people. However, 1 Kings ends quite differently. There Solomon says, may you listen to your people, "for you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance". If Josephus did indeed know this prayer (and not just the one in 2 Chronicles as we suggested in the introduction to the discussion of these prayers), then this statement was obviously unacceptable to

[460] 1 Kgs 8:31–40, 2 Chr 6:22–31.
[461] 1 Kgs 8:41–43, 2 Chr 6:32–33.
[462] CA 2.121–124.

Josephus. From the passage in *Contra Apionem* we know that Jews were accused of hating foreigners. Therefore, living in a foreign country, being a guest of the Romans and writing for non-Jews, Josephus could not write such a statement about Jews being singled out from all the nations. If he wanted to stay friends with the Romans, he would have to reject this statement and make it clear that Jews were not hostile to non-Jews.[463]

XIX. The Israelites at Mount Carmel: AJ 8.343

> When the Israelites saw this, they fell onto the earth and worshipped the one God, and they called him the greatest and only true [god], but the other [gods] just names created by cheap and silly opinion.

It may be asked whether this passage complies with the definition of prayer given in Chapter 1, since there is no address in the second person. However, there are two reasons to include this passage: first, the people exclaim during worship, which resembles a prayer; and secondly, the second part of the text suggests a prayer with an address in the second person: "You are the true God, the others are just invented". It would be difficult to refer to 'others' in an exclamation with no address.

The story in 1 Kings 18 of Elijah's conflict with the priests of king Ahab is well known. Elijah tells Ahab that he and his family are to be blamed for the drought and hunger that prevail in the country because they worship Baal. To prove that what he says is true he orders Ahab to bring all his priests, as well as the people, to Mount Carmel. When they have been gathered, Elijah proposes to settle the issue as to which god should be followed by having each ask their own god to set a slaughtered bull on fire. The people agree to Elijah's proposal.

Elijah tells the Baal priests to go first. Up to this point the story in *Antiquitates* follows that in 1 Kings closely, but from this point on differences emerge. In 1 Kings, all morning and afternoon the priests call upon Baal to set fire to their bull. Josephus departs significantly from this in that, whereas in 1 Kings the priests call upon Baal alone, in *Antiquitates* they call upon many gods.[464] Elijah ridicules the priests, who do not succeed in their attempt to get their bull set fire.

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[463] See also the discussion of the universality of God's providence in the section on Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, p. 97.

[464] See Eberhardt, 'Zwischen', 14–15.

Then it is Elijah's turn. He builds an altar and puts a slaughtered bull on it. He next orders some men to poor water over the bull, and then starts to pray to God. In 1 Kings 18:36–37 he asks God to show the people that he, Elijah, his servant, will do anything God commands, and he asks God to answer his prayer in order that the people will find their way back to God. In AJ 8.342, Josephus shortened Elijah's prayer and made him ask God to reveal his power to the people, who have lived in error for such a long time now. God answers instantly by sending fire that consumes the bull.

In both accounts the people react exuberantly and acknowledge Elijah's God as their own.[465] By order of Elijah the people kill the priests and shortly after (directly after in 1 Kings) it starts to rain, bringing the drought to an end.

Elijah's prayer is one by which the power of God[466] is revealed: "Having done these things, he began to pray to God and beseech him to make his power manifest to the people, which had been in error for such a long time now".[467] The prayer in 1 Kings 18 has the same message: answer me and show your power so that the people will turn back to the right track. However, as was remarked above, this prayer is longer; moreover, it is in direct speech and even contains an invocation.[468] Josephus shortened this prayer but expanded the prayer the Israelites say in response. Evidently he considered the reaction of the Israelites more important than Elijah's performance.

A. *The Israelites' prayer*

Whereas in 1 Kings the Israelites call only "The Lord is God, the Lord is God",[469] in *Antiquitates* the prayer is longer. In Josephus' version the Israelites make a full-scale confession of faith by saying that God is the greatest and the only true God. They also contrast God to the gods of the priests, which they say to be no more than silly names.

Josephus introduces the prayer by saying that the Israelites fell on the ground and made obeisance "to the one god" (ἕνα θεόν). This is not said by the Israelites in the prayer but is an authorial comment by Josephus. He wants to make clear the difference between the multiple

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[465] The prayer treated here.
[466] See also the discussion of the prayer by Manoah's wife, pp. 131–132.
[467] Elijah at Mount Carmel, AJ 8.342.
[468] 1 Kgs 18:36–37.
[469] 1 Kgs 18:39.

gods of the other priests and the one god of Elijah, whom the Israelites come to recognise as the only true god.

1. *The greatest and only true God*

In their prayer the people call God "the greatest" (μέγιστος). God is frequently called this in Josephus' work. He uses this expression 15 times, all instances in *Antiquitates*.[470] Josephus seems to have been somewhat unusual for his time in using the epithet 'greatest' for God as frequently as he does.[471] In the Septuagint God is referred to in this way only eight times: once in the Additions to Esther; once in 2 Maccabees, and six times in 3 Maccabees.[472] Philo uses the epithet only three times.[473] The expression does not occur in the New Testament at all. Strangely enough, the related and more common expression ὁ ὕψιστος θεός, 'the highest god', occurs only once in Josephus' work, in a decree of Augustus mentioning the title of the high priest Hyrcanus.[474]

At the moment of the prayer we are considering now, the Israelites choose Elijah's God; this is stressed by saying that they acknowledged him as "the greatest". Preceding this prayer, in AJ 8.319 Josephus introduces Elijah, saying: "Now there was a certain prophet of the greatest God (τοῦ μεγίστου θεοῦ)".

The people also call God "the only true God". This agrees with what Elijah has said earlier, when he proposed the contest: if the people consider their "native god" to be the true and only God (ἀληθῆ καὶ μόνον), they should follow him, but if they want to serve the foreign gods they should do that; but, he adds, if the wood should be set on fire "they would know the true nature of God (τὴν ἀληθῆ φύσιν)".[475] In their prayer the people repeat the word ἀληθῆς ('true') and say that the God of Elijah is the one true god (ἀληθῆ μόνον). This is the opposite of what they say about the other gods, namely that they are no more than names made up by people.[476]

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[470] AJ 6.86; 7.353; 8.319, 343; 9.133, 211, 288, 289; 10.68; 11.3, 90; 12.257; 13.64, 67; 15.385.

[471] See also Schlatter, *Wie*, 18–19.

[472] Add Esth 8:12q; 2 Macc 3:36; 3 Macc 1:9, 16; 3:11; 4:16; 5:25; 7:22.

[473] Philo, *De Abrahamo* 235; *De migratione Abrahami* 58; *De somniis* 1.72.

[474] AJ 16.163. On ὕψιστος see also Schlatter, *Wie*, 18–19, and Pucci Ben-Zeev, *Jewish*, 240–241.

[475] AJ 8.337–338.

[476] See also AJ 11.55–56, where Zerubbabel tells king Darius that the truth is the strongest of all things, because truth is God.

The word δόξα, which we encountered in the second prayer by Solomon at the temple, appears again here. In Solomon's prayer Josephus spoke of the "opinion", δόξα, of the priests that God had really entered the temple. This turned out to be only an opinion of fools, and not a true fact, because a wise man knows that God is never in any physical place.[477] In the prayer by the Israelites the names of the other gods are said to be erroneously invented by mere "opinion" (δόξα): the names themselves are not real names, still less the 'gods' whose names they purport to be. That δόξα belongs to foolishness here, as it did in 8.106 and 114, is stressed by the adjectives φαύλη and ἀνοήτος: cheap or easy, and silly.[478]

Schlatter does not discuss the attribute ἀληθής in his *Wie sprach Josephus von Gott*. There are, however, passages in which Josephus uses this word to characterise God. First, in addition to the statements of Elijah discussed above, the contrast between other gods and 'the true god' is also to be found in AJ 9.256. Here Josephus writes that king Ahaz "began to honour the gods of the Assyrians, and seemed ready to honour any god rather than his father's God, the true one". With respect to the biblical text this is an addition by Josephus and may be considered an authorial comment. Secondly, in AJ 10.263 king Darius, after Daniel's miraculous rescue from the lions, acknowledges in a letter, which he sends out all across the country, that the God whom Daniel worships "alone is the true and almighty" (ἀληθῆ καὶ τὸ πάντων κράτος). This is Josephus' rendering of Daniel 6:26–28, which sets out the content of Darius' letter. In the biblical text the letter does not say that God is 'the true god'.[479] In both these cases, Josephus shows a king who previously worshipped other gods saying that he now acknowledges the Hebrew god as the only and true one.

The idea is also found in other Jewish literature. Sibylline Oracles fr.i.10–11 states: "For what human being of flesh and blood can see the heavenly, true and immortal God". Similar to Josephus' statement is Wisdom of Solomon 12:27, which says: "For when in their suffering they became incensed at those creatures which they had thought to be

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[477] See the discussion of Solomon's prayers at the temple, p. 168.

[478] See also the discussion of Zerubbabel's prayer, pp. 184–185.

[479] Dan 6:26–27: "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions".

gods (…), they saw and recognised as the true God him whom they had before refused to know". Here again the true God is set against other gods.[480]

In the New Testament God is called the 'true God' particularly in the gospel of John.[481] In John 17:3 Jesus says in a prayer: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God (…)". Outside this gospel there are a few more passages referring to God as true.[482]

Calling God 'the greatest' and 'the only true one' seems to imply that there are other, inferior gods, and this might seem at odds with the idea we have of Judaism as a monotheistic religion. Two points should be made about this. First and foremost, it should be stressed that phrases such as 'the greatest' and 'the only' were commonly used for invoking or praising gods, and therefore that using them in relation to one god would not necessarily imply belief in the existence of any others. Secondly, it is important to keep in mind the difference between monotheism and worshipping one God. The religion of ancient Israel was not, in fact, monotheistic to the extent of claiming that only one god exists. It was more 'monolatric' than monotheistic: the Israelites worshipped only YHWH as their God, because they had a unique bond with this God. But they did not explicitly deny the existence of other gods, as was done later in the Hellenistic period, and thus in Josephus' time.[483]

As for Josephus, we can say that he was truly monotheistic. He believed that there is only one God, and he identified this God, his Jewish God, with the divine principle of the Greek philosophers.[484] In the story of Elijah and the Baal priests, however, Josephus is relating an incident in Jewish history specifically connected with the issue of worshipping the Jewish God as opposed to other gods. We can thus see that the terminology Josephus uses in this prayer is especially fitting to its context.

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[480] These are both uses of ἀληθής (see also SibOr 5.493, 499 and Wis 15:1), but the same idea can be expressed with ἀληθινός (see for example SibOr fr i.20, fr iii.46; 3 Macc 6:18).

[481] John 3:33; 7:28; 8:26 and 17:3.

[482] Rom 3:4; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Rev 3:7 and 6:10.

[483] Tromp, 'Critique', 105–108.

[484] CA 2.190; Van Unnik, *Godspredikaat*, 35.

XX. Hezekiah Asking for a Longer Life: AJ 10.26

> So distressed by these thoughts and lamenting, he beseeched God to give him a little longer time to live, until birth of children, and not to let his soul leave him before he had become a father.

The context of king Hezekiah's prayer is straightforward. Hezekiah has fallen ill and the people around him have given up on him recovering. He prays to God to let him live longer, and God hears this prayer and decides to grant Hezekiah' wish, sending his answer by way of Isaiah, the king's prophet. When Isaiah relays God's message to Hezekiah, Hezekiah does not believe him and asks for proof in the form of a miracle. When this miracle happens, Hezekiah believes Isaiah and goes to the temple to thank God.

The broad outline of the story, given above, is essentially the same in 2 Kings, Isaiah and *Antiquitates*.[485] However there are some differences in the details. To start with, in the biblical text Isaiah comes to warn Hezekiah to make preparations because he is about to die; this is what prompts Hezekiah to say his prayer. In *Antiquitates*, however, Hezekiah starts to pray of his own accord. Moreover, Josephus writes of doctors and friends giving up on Hezekiah, whereas the biblical text merely says that he became ill at the point of death, and that Isaiah is the only one near him.

In the biblical text but not in *Antiquitates* Isaiah informs Hezekiah that he is about to die. Perhaps Josephus did not want to show Isaiah making a prophesy that in the end does not come true (since in fact Hezekiah goes on living). To underscore the gravity of Hezekiah's illness Josephus therefore introduced the doctors and friends who give up on his recovering, instead of having Isaiah make prophesy that will ultimately prove false.[486]

1. *The sources and the thanksgiving prayer*

There are also some differences between the accounts in 2 Kings 20:1–11 and Isaiah 38:1–8. Isaiah tells the story more compactly, but includes an extensive thanksgiving hymn said by Hezekiah following the miracle, which 2 Kings does not even mention. Josephus does mention this hymn, but does not give its contents.

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[485] 2 Kgs 20:1–11, Isa 38:1–8 and AJ 10.24–29. In 2 Chr 32:24 there is only a very short reference to this story.

[486] See also Feldman, *Studies*, 390.

It is not clear whether Josephus was prompted by Isaiah 38 when he mentioned Hezekiah's thanksgiving hymn. If he did use Isaiah as a source, then he deliberately chose to omit the content of the prayer, merely saying that Hezekiah "went up to the temple and did obeisance to God and offered prayers to him".[487] If Josephus indeed derived this statement from the hymn in Isaiah, his choice would be in line with the way he handled Moses' song in Exodus 15 and Deborah's song in Judges 5.[488] It is also possible, however, that Josephus did not get the prayer story from Isaiah, but from 2 Kings 20:5, which says that after he is cured Hezekiah will "go up to the temple of the Lord".

Taking everything into account, we cannot determine which biblical text Josephus used as his source, 2 Kings or Isaiah, or whether he in fact used both. Mention of three more days of illness before Hezekiah will be cured occurs in AJ 10.27 and 2 Kings 20:5, but not in Isaiah 38:5; similarly Josephus and 2 Kings state that Hezekiah does not believe Isaiah and asks for a miracle, whereas in Isaiah 38 God immediately proposes the miracle himself. On the other hand, Josephus' description of the miracle itself more closely resembles the account in Isaiah: 2 Kings speaks of a shadow on the steps of the stairs, whereas both Josephus and Isaiah mention the sun. But this is not a strong consideration since a change from telling the story in terms of a shadow to telling it in terms of the sun is easily made. Another similarity between Isaiah and *Antiquitates* is that, like Isaiah 38, Josephus makes no mention of the fig cake, which in 2 Kings the prophet Isaiah lays upon Hezekiah's boil, after which he is cured. However, Josephus' omission here is also explicable without reference to Isaiah 38, because the next verse in 2 Kings says that Hezekiah was ill for three more days, which Josephus may have thought not to tally with the healing fig cake.

The point I want to stress here is that although it is possible that Josephus had Isaiah 38 as a source, it is equally possible that he wrote his account without having seen it.

A. *Hezekiah's prayer for a longer life*

There are also some major differences in the accounts of Hezekiah's main prayer asking for a longer life. First, Josephus does not present any form of argument, which is in contrast to the biblical prayer.[489]

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[487] AJ 10.29.
[488] Resp. AJ 2.346 and 5.209.
[489] 2 Kgs 20:3.

In the biblical prayer Hezekiah refers to his past good deeds and asks God to remember them. The implicit argument is 'I did good, so please now do good to me', the *da-quia-dedi* argument. Although Josephus presented arguments of this kind elsewhere, he does not do so here but instead makes Hezekiah's request more direct: please grant me more years to live.

Second, and most important, is Josephus' amplification of the request, so that Hezekiah asks to be allowed to live until he has had children.[490] Hezekiah's illness was, according to Josephus, worsened by his realisation that he would die without leaving any children and thus without a successor. In addition, in the next section Josephus gives the reason God is willing to grant the request, which is that Hezekiah did not complain about being deprived of the benefits of kingship, but instead asked to have children who would inherit his royal power. This idea is nowhere to be found in the biblical text. In 10.37 Josephus writes that Hezekiah's son Manasseh succeeded to the throne. This is parallel to 2 Kings 21:1 and 2 Chronicles 33:1, which says that Manasseh was at that time 12 years old. Josephus must have concluded that this son was born only after Hezekiah's disease and his recovery from it.

The only statement in the biblical text that comes close is that God says he will save the king's power for the sake of his servant David. This could have prompted Josephus to think of the promise made to David which he had written about earlier, namely that David's descendants would inherit the kingship.[491] Then it is possible that Josephus chose not to mention David explicitly at this point, but—instead of speaking of the past—to speak of the future. This still does not explain, however, why Josephus made children the main subject of the prayer.

In rabbinical tradition it is said that Hezekiah was to die early as a punishment for refusing to have children.[492] This theme is not present in *Antiquitates*, but obviously Josephus was aware that the possibility existed of Hezekiah's dying without leaving an heir to the throne. Feldman states that Josephus must have been acquainted with rabbinical tradition on this point, but I think Josephus might just as well have thought of this himself. The stress he lays on it, however, remains unexplained.

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[490] For prayers about the request for children, see the list of prayer subjects in appendix 2 and the discussion of the prayer by Manoah, pp. 130–131.

[491] See the discussions of David's thanksgiving hymn, pp. 143–144 and Solomon's prayer at the temple, pp. 166–167.

[492] b.*Berakot* 10a. See also y.San. 10.28b, see Begg/Spilsbury, *Flavius*, 213, n. 104.

Perhaps more helpful to remember here is the theme of the importance of raising a family, and with this the grief felt when people die unmarried and childless, ἄτεκνος, as is expressed in some Jewish funeral inscriptions in Egypt.[493] In most of these inscriptions it is merely mentioned that someone died childless. In one case, however, it is explicitly remarked how sad it is that the person in question (a woman) died childless: "weep for me, for I died childless".[494] In Pseudo-Phocylides the idea is also expressed in *Sentences* 175–176: "Remain not unmarried, lest you die nameless. Give nature her due, beget in your turn as you were begotten".

That to die childless is a terrible thing was also a common theme in ancient Greek literature. An example of lamenting for people who died childless occurs in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*. The chorus has just heard about the rescue of the city but also the death of their two kings, the sons of Oedipus, and it wonders: "should I rejoice and shout in triumph for the unharmed safety of the city, or should I lament our leaders in war, now wretched, ill-fated and childless?"[495] Aristotle writes about human felicity in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Also there are certain external advantages, the lack of which sullies supreme felicity, such as good birth, satisfactory children, and personal beauty: a man of very ugly appearance or low birth, or childless and alone in the world, is not our idea of a happy man".[496] Another example in which being childless is used to stress the unhappiness of a character occurs in Sophocles' *Electra*. Electra is waiting for her brother to come home and avenge their father's death. She is very grieved and says: "Yes, I await him with unwearied longing, as I walk my sad path from day to day childless and unwed, bathed in tears, bearing that endless doom of evils".[497] Lattimore mentions several epitaphs that concern this and related themes such as dying a virgin and dying unmarried.[498] He concludes correctly: "The appeal of this theme is obvious. One who dies childless threatens the continuity of the family".[499]

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[493] Van der Horst, *Ancient*, 47; JIGRE 34; 38; 50; 65; 76; 110.
[494] JIGRE 101; the text is insecure (ἄτε[…]ς ἐγὼ γάρ), but it seems to be most plausible to read the first word as ἄτεκνος.
[495] Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas*, 825–828.
[496] Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1.8.16.
[497] Sophocles, *Electra*, 164–167.
[498] Lattimore, *Themes*, 192–194.
[499] Lattimore, *Themes*, 194.

XXI. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: AJ 10.199

> And he [the king] ordered to put a hold on the execution of the magicians until he would know the promise of Daniel; but the boy went back to his place, with his relatives, and beseeched God throughout the whole night to enlighten[500] him and to save the magicians and the Chaldaeans, together with whom they were to be killed, from the wrath of the king, by revealing the vision to him and making clear what the king had forgotten to have seen in his sleep during the past night.

King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and asks his Chaldaeans, magicians and seers[501] to tell him the dream and its explanation. Here there is already a major difference between the biblical text and *Antiquitates*.[502] In the Book of Daniel the king appears to test his magicians by choosing not to tell them the content of his dream. He says that he will only believe them if they can tell him what he dreamed; then he will know that they can interpret it. If they cannot do this he will kill them. Josephus, however, says that Nebuchadnezzar forgot the content of his dream, which becomes the reason for his not telling it to the magicians. He even says that the king also dreamt the interpretation of the dream but forgot that as well. Josephus thus provides a less unattractive image of the Babylonian king than the Book of Daniel, in which Nebuchadnezzar is presented as someone who tests his servants severely.

When the magicians are unable to tell him the dream, let alone the interpretation of it, the king orders them to be executed. Hearing of this order, and knowing it will also involve himself and his relatives, Daniel inquires of Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, the reason for the execution. Arioch tells him about the dream and Daniel asks him to make the king stay the execution.[503] The king agrees, and Daniel goes home to ask God about the dream. The biblical text and

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[500] Variants in the Greek text for γνωρίσαι are σῶσαι and ἐλεῆσαι. The translation would then be: 'he beseeched God (. . .) to save him', or 'to pity him'. The latin translation (ut ei somnium indicaret) seems to have had a *Vorlage* which used δηλῶσαι, which is in line with the δηλοῦν in 198, the δήλην in 199 and the δηλῶσαι in 202. Γνωρίσαι is difficult to translate, because the verb demands an object, which is not present in the text; however, reading σῶσαι or ἐλεῆσαι would not solve this problem, because both of them need an object as well. Therefore it is difficult to make a decision. I choose to read γνωρίσαι because within the context it makes the best sense.

[501] These three are in the following summarised as 'magicians'. For a discussion of these groups see Begg/Spilsbury, *Flavius*, 277 n. 829.

[502] Dan 2 and AJ 10.195–212.

[503] In the biblical text Daniel goes to the king himself, Dan 2:16.

Josephus' differ as to what exactly is asked for in this prayer. In the biblical text Daniel orders his relatives "to seek the mercy of God".[504] In *Antiquitates*, however, Daniel prays to God himself. This prayer will be discussed below. In both texts God answers the prayer and tells Daniel what he needs to know.

After the revelation of this knowledge God is thanked. In *Antiquitates* Daniel does the thanking together with his relatives (who are now even called brothers), who share his joy about the revelation. In mentioning the thanksgiving prayer Josephus makes only a very brief reference to its content: "he gave thanks to God who had taken pity on their youth".[505] In the biblical text Daniel prays to God on his own, and the whole content of the prayer is given in direct speech.[506] He calls God the one who brings wisdom and knowledge, who sets up kings and deposes them and who can change times and seasons, and he thanks God for making known to them the king's dream. Since Josephus made Daniel ask for the revelation himself in the first prayer, it would have involved some repetition to make him go through what had been asked for again when giving thanks for receiving it. Evidently Josephus considered the first prayer, in which information is asked for, more important than the thanksgiving prayer.

After the thanksgiving Daniel goes to Nebuchadnezzar. He tells him that the mystery has been revealed to him by God, and tells the king about his dream of a statue of different elements, which is struck by a large stone. He explains that this should be interpreted as his kingship being followed by other kings, whose reign will in the end be overthrown by the kingdom of God.[507] The king is very happy with this explanation and worships Daniel, in Josephus' words, "in the manner in which men worship God".[508] Daniel is appointed governor of the kingdom, and his name is changed into Belteshazzar.[509]

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[504] Dan 2:18.

[505] Daniel's thanksgiving, AJ 10.202. Mentioning the youthfulness is an addition by Josephus with regard to the biblical prayer, probably to increase the sympathy of the readers (Begg/Spilsbury, *Flavius*, 280 n. 862).

[506] Dan 2:20–23.

[507] This last explanation is omitted by Josephus because, so he says, it is not his task to write about things that are still in the future.

[508] AJ 10.211.

[509] For a detailed discussion of this passage, see Gnuse, *Dreams*, 178–182.

A. *The prayer*

As remarked earlier, the differences between the prayer referred to in Daniel and the prayer text in *Antiquitates* are great. Although it is instigated by Daniel, the biblical prayer is actually said by his relatives, who ask God to have mercy on them. In *Antiquitates* Daniel says the prayer himself. His relatives accompany him, but the verb expressing beseeching is in the singular, ἱκετεύει, and thus Daniel is the only one who prays. Josephus most likely made Daniel say the prayer himself to emphasise that he is the one who can interpret dreams. If the relatives were the ones to ask for the revelation then the merit would not be solely Daniel's.

1. *The request*

There are also differences in the request. A small difference exists with regard to the request to reveal the content of the dream and the explanation. In *Antiquitates* this request is much more explicitly stated than in the biblical text. This can be explained as follows. The biblical text has the ambiguous sentence "seek mercy concerning the mystery". In his version of the prayer Josephus divided this into two requests that make better sense: 'have mercy' and 'reveal information concerning the mystery'.

Like the prayer by Moses at the burning bush, this prayer is one which asks for knowledge to be revealed.[510] The knowledge asked for in this prayer is the content and meaning of a dream. Besides Daniel there are other dream interpreters mentioned in Josephus' work, namely Joseph and Josephus himself.[511] However, this is the only dream interpretation in which a prayer is involved. In all other cases of dream interpretation the dream is told to the interpreter (or dreamt by himself, as is the case with Josephus), after which the interpreter explains the dream by himself without first asking God's help. Daniel's case here is a unique one, since the person who dreamt cannot remember his dream, and consequently God has to be asked for the content of the dream. In addition, unlike the other cases, Daniel does not explain the dream himself, but asks God for the interpretation (which was dreamt by the king as well). So both the dream and its interpretation are dreamt by

[510] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the burning bush, p. 91.

[511] Daniel: AJ 10.194; another dream interpretation of Daniel is in AJ 10.217; Joseph: AJ 2.65–69, 72–73 and 84–86; Josephus: BJ 3.351–353.

the king, and both are, after being asked for in a prayer, revealed to Daniel by God. Daniel is thus only an intermediary.

The most important difference, however, is that, whereas in the biblical text it is supposedly for themselves that the relatives are asked to seek mercy from God, in *Antiquitates* the stress is laid on the salvation of the magicians and not, in the first instance, on their own salvation. This is again in line with Josephus' statement in CA 2.196 ("first one must pray for common safety, and after that for oneself").[512] In *Antiquitates* Daniel's primary concern seems to be to save the magicians.[513]

XXII. Zerubbabel: AJ 11.64–65

> (64) So, having obtained these things from the king, Zerubbabel went out of the palace and looking up to heaven he began to thank God for the wisdom and the victory he had obtained through it in the presence of Darius, for he would not be worthy of those things, "if," he said, "you had not been gracious to me, Lord". (65) Thus having thanked God for the present things, and having asked that he would give similar in the future, he went to Babylon and brought his countrymen the good message from[514] the king.

Zerubbabel, governor of the Jewish prisoners in Babylon, is one of the bodyguards of King Darius. One night, after a party at the palace, Darius is unable to sleep and he calls his bodyguards to entertain him. He proposes to ask them a question about the strongest thing on earth. The guard with the best answer will be rewarded with beautiful clothes and the status of a relative of the king. Unlike the source text in 3 Ezra,[515] where it is the guards who propose this game, in *Antiquitates* it is the king himself who brings up the idea. Josephus' Darius also gives four options to choose from, whereas in 3 Ezra the question who or what is the strongest is left open.

The four options are wine, kings, women and truth; these are the same answers as in 3 Ezra. The next day each guard gives his opinion. The first guard thinks wine is the strongest because it makes kings' spirits weak; the second guard thinks kings are the strongest because they rule

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[512] See pp. 36–39 and 245–248.

[513] See also Feldman, *Josephus's*, 645.

[514] The manuscripts have περί instead of πάρα at this point. However, Marcus' emendation should be accepted, since περί does not make sense here.

[515] 3 Ezra 3:1–4:63.

the country; the third is Zerubbabel, and he says women are stronger than wine or kings because they are the ones who give birth and rule the household, and because they have the ability to influence men and thus kings. However, Zerubbabel says, the strongest thing above all else is truth, because there is no injustice in the truth. Josephus makes explicit what the 3 Ezra text suggests: truth is God.

The king is very impressed by this answer, and so are all the other dignitaries gathered in the palace. Zerubbabel wins the contest and because the king loves the answer so much, he grants Zerubbabel an extra favour by allowing him to ask anything he wants. Then Zerubbabel reminds him of a promise he made earlier: that he would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and return the vessels stolen from the Jerusalem temple by King Nebuchadnezzar. Darius promises to do so: he allows the Jews who want to, to go free and he gives them extra land and permission to perform their sacrifices. Zerubbabel is pleased at this and outside the palace he starts to pray. After this prayer he tells his countrymen the good news and they thank God. They celebrate for a week and then appoint several men to go to Jerusalem with their families. Joyfully they go on their way.[516]

A. *The prayer*

It is particularly noteworthy that this prayer is one of the two which contain both direct and indirect speech. The other is the prayer by Mordecai which will be discussed later. Josephus has written several speeches in this manner, but these are the only prayers. Altogether there are only eleven prayers in direct speech, two of which are Mordecai and Zerubbabel. Compared to the Bible, where almost every prayer is written in direct speech, there are not many.

1. *Wisdom, victory and glory?*

The similarity between the narratives in 3 Ezra and *Antiquitates* continues in the prayer. Josephus has Zerubbabel thank God for the wisdom (σοφία) and the victory (νίκη), as does the biblical text: "From you comes the victory (νίκη); from you comes wisdom (σοφία), and yours is the glory (δόξα)".[517] This last, glory, is left out by Josephus' Zerubbabel.

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[516] AJ 11.31–67.

[517] 3 Ezra 4:59; the prayer in 3 Ezra is dependent of a prayer by Daniel in Daniel 2:20–30, to which there is a brief allusion in *Antiquitates*, namely, Daniel's thanksgiving (AJ 10.202).

Considering the meanings this word has in Josephus' work, this is not surprising; in most instances (155) it means personal 'fame' or 'honour' (80 times),[518] or 'opinion' or 'appearance' (52 times) as we saw in the long prayer by King Solomon at the temple, and in the prayer by the Israelites at Mount Carmel. It is used nowhere to express God's glory, which is what the word tends to express in the Septuagint and the New Testament.[519] The only instance in which the δόξα of God is referred to is in AJ 4.48, Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, where Moses asks God to punish those who rage against his (God's) δόξα; however, the most appropriate translation in both cases is 'honour' rather than glory. In other words, we may say that Josephus tends to use the word δόξα in the classical Greek, and not the Jewish sense. His omission of the word in this prayer is therefore to be expected.

2. *Being 'found worthy'*

Zerubbabel says in *Antiquitates* that he would not have been found worthy of wisdom and victory if God had not been gracious.[520] We saw an earlier reference to being found worthy in Isaac's blessing, where Isaac says God has judged him worthy of the things he possesses. In the Hellenistic world and in Josephus' days, it was common to ask whether someone was found "worthy" of doing something or receiving something in a religious context.[521]

Josephus also used ἄξιος very often. For instance, in a passage in BJ 2.138 about what one has to do to join the Essenes, we are told that he has to give proof of his endurance and after this "his character is tested for two years more, and only then, if found worthy (φανεὶς ἄξιος), is he enrolled in the society". Another example is in *Antiquitates*: Ezra has set out for Jerusalem together with the Jews, after receiving the letter from the Persian king that they were authorised to go and that the leaders of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia should follow Ezra's orders. Ezra delivers the letter to them, whereupon they assist the Jews in all necessary ways. Then Josephus writes: "These things, then, were what Ezra himself had planned, but that they turned out well for him was,

[518] See for example David's thanksgiving hymn, AJ 7.95.

[519] See also Schlatter, *Wie*, 21: "Zur palästinischen Formel כָּבוֹד, neben der das neutestamentliche δόξα steht, hat Josephus keine Parallele. δόξα heißt bei Josephus häufig Ruhm (…)".

[520] For Josephus' use of εὐμένεια I refer to Isaac's blessing, pp. 72–73.

[521] Van Unnik, 'Worthy', 451.

I think, due to God who judged him worthy (ἄξιος) of obtaining his desires because of his goodness and righteousness".[522]

Van Unnik indicates that there is a variety of contexts in which ἄξιος could be used.[523] In Revelation 5 the question is who is worthy to open the scroll and break the seals.[524] 4 Baruch speaks of people who were not worthy to keep the keys to the Temple.[525] Another kind of worthiness is described as being worthy of knowledge, like reading books or hearing about mysteries.[526] In Wisdom, being ἄξιος is one of the *Leitmotive*,[527] one can be worthy in a positive or a negative sense; if positive, one is found to be worthy of God or be his property, if negative, one is to be found worthy of terrible punishments.[528] Josephus' use in Zerubbabel's and Isaac's prayers is similar to that of Philo, for example, who speaks of someone who is worthy of God's grace (τῷ χάριτος ἀξίῳ)[529] or Revelation 5:12, which says, "Worthy is the Lamb (…) to receive wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing".

Some texts speak of a test showing whether someone is worthy, like the afore-mentioned Pseudo-Clementine letter, or the text from 4 Baruch. Josephus' Zerubbabel says he is worthy only because God was gracious: he owes his worthiness not to a test he had to pass, but to God's graciousness.

3. *Omitted invocation words*

Remarkably, Josephus left one typical Jewish expression out of the prayer, namely Zerubbabel's "I give you thanks, O master of our ancestors (δέσποτα τῶν πατέρων)". As we will see in Chapter 6, Josephus tends not to use these typically Jewish ways of invoking God, but prefers to use more general, philosophical terms, like 'creator' or 'master of the universe'.[530]

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[522] AJ 11.139.
[523] Van Unnik, 'Worthy', 451–458.
[524] Rev 5:2.
[525] 4 Bar. 4:5.
[526] Books: 4 Ezra 14:45–47; Pseudo-Clement, *Homiliae* 1.2; mysteries: Philo, *De cherubim* 42; Barn 9:9.
[527] Fichtner, *Weisheit*, 6.
[528] Positive: Wis 3:5 and 1:16; negative: Wis 15:6; 16:1; 18:4; 19:4.
[529] Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 1.43.
[530] See Chapter 6.

XXIII. Ezra about Mixed Marriages: AJ 11.143–144

> (143) Then Ezra stood up from the ground and stretching his hands to heaven he said that he was ashamed to look up to it because of the sins of the people, who had thrown out of their memory the things that had befallen our[531] fathers because of their impiety. (144) And he besought God—who had preserved some seed and remnant out of their former misfortune and captivity and had re-established them once more to Jerusalem and their home country, and had forced the kings of the Persians to take pity on them—to forgive also the present sins, although they had done things deserving death; it was in keeping with the goodness of God to discharge even such people from chastisement.

There are two sources available for the story in which this prayer is embedded: the account in the biblical Book of Ezra and the account in the apocryphal book 3 Ezra. The two stories are the same, and Josephus followed them.[532]

Ezra, high priest[533] of the Jewish people, has returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, after King Xerxes gave him permission to go, together with any other Jews who wanted to. However, in Jerusalem, people come to him and tell him about some members of the community, among them priests, who married foreign women. They are afraid that God will punish everyone because of their error. Ezra is shocked by the news and starts to pray.[534]

After this prayer a man named Achonoias[535] convinces Ezra to persuade all men with foreign wives to divorce them, because that is what God wants. Ezra summons the men who returned from Babylon and he asks them to divorce their wives. The men say they will do so, but that it is difficult because there are so many mixed marriages and it is the winter season. They come to an agreement and in the end all mixed marriages are dissolved.

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[531] Josephus appears to be acting out of character here by writing 'our' fathers. The sentence is clearly part of the prayer, which is in indirect speech, and therefore one would expect him to write 'their' fathers; by writing 'our' it is not clear who the speaker is meant to be, Josephus or Ezra.

[532] AJ 11.140–153; Ezra 9:1–10:44; 3 Ezra 8:65–9:36.

[533] See AJ 11.121; in the parallel passage in Ezra and 3 Ezra, it is not Ezra himself but his ancestor Aaron who is named as the chief priest; however, in 3 Ezra 9:40 Ezra is named as the high priest; see the footnote by Marcus in the Loeb edition of Josephus' text.

[534] AJ 11.143–144; Ezra 9:6–15 and 3 Ezra 8:71–87.

[535] Shechaniah in the biblical Ezra, but not mentioned in 3 Ezra.

Josephus' prayer is less comprehensive than the biblical prayer.[536] Josephus turned his version of the prayer into a request for God to forgive the people who sinned (not including Ezra himself). The biblical prayer consists mainly of a confession of guilt (in which Ezra seems to include himself), but without the actual request for forgiveness included in Josephus' text.

The argument Josephus uses is twofold. The first is of the *da-quia-dedisti* type: 'forgive their sins now, like you did before'; Josephus refers to things God did for the Jews in the (recent) past, and again he is using *tricolon*: God who preserved some seed and remnant out of their captivity, who took care of their return to Jerusalem and who forced the Persian king to take pity and let them go. The second argument Josephus uses is that it belongs to the goodness of God to forgive their sins. This argument will be discussed later.

A. *The prayer*

1. *References to the past*

Often, in prayers, Josephus' characters refer to God's actions in the past to emphasise their request.[537] In this case Ezra refers to three actions in the recent past. At the start of the prayer he also refers indirectly to past chastisements by God, namely for the impiety of the forefathers, but this is not used to underline the argument.

The three references together form the history of the Babylonian exile. The first reference is the "seed and remnant" that God preserved out of their distress and captivity. It is somewhat vaguely expressed, but presumably Josephus means to say that God kept the people alive during the exile so that they could eventually return to their home country. Then Ezra says that God let them return once more to Jerusalem. Finally Ezra says that God forced the king of the Persians to take pity on them. This refers to the permission Xerxes gave Ezra to go back, and maybe also to the permission Darius gave to Zerubbabel some 50 years earlier to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

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[536] It is still not clear whether Josephus used Ezra or 3 Ezra or yet another text as a source for his account. For a detailed discussion of the subject I refer to Feldman 1998b, 473 n. 1. As far as the prayer text is concerned, the two possible source texts known to us agree, except for some verses which have no parallel in Josephus' prayer. I shall therefore refer to Josephus' source simply as 'the biblical prayer'.

[537] See for example Isaac's blessing, Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent and Joshua's prayer.

There are also references to the past in the biblical prayer, where they appear to serve a different purpose; their message seems to be more like, "how could we be so sinful, when you were so good to us in the past?" The references are on the same lines as in Josephus' prayer; God who stayed with the people, while they were in distress during their captivity, who brought them into favour with the Persian kings and allowed them to rebuild Jerusalem and Judaea.[538]

2. *Things deserving death*

Josephus makes a rather strong statement by saying that those people who had mixed marriages were doing "things that deserved death". In the prayers of Ezra 9 and 3 Ezra 8, the judgement is even more severe: Ezra refers to the threat of extinction of everyone and everything: ῥίζα καὶ σπέρμα καὶ ὄνομα ('root, seed and name').[539] Josephus modifies this comment, using the somewhat softer, 'we did things deserving death'; complete destruction of all was apparently too harsh for him, something that he naturally did not want to wish upon his people;[540] however, that it was wrong to marry non-Jews and that such marriages should be punished is still present in his version of the prayer.

This topic gives us the opportunity to look at Josephus' own marital life. We know he married four times. His first wife was left behind in Jerusalem, together with his family;[541] we may assume that she was Jewish. His second wife was from Caesarea; she was among the prisoners seized there and he was forced to marry her by Vespasian, but she left him when he left Caesarea.[542] Since we know that the prisoners in Caesarea were Jews (the Greek inhabitants were in favour of Vespasian), we may assume that this wife was also Jewish.[543] His third wife was from Alexandria. Josephus says that he left her because he was displeased about her behaviour.[544] They had three sons, of whom one, Hyrcanus, was still alive at the time Josephus was writing. Since this is a Jewish name it is entirely possible, but by no means certain, that this wife was also Jewish. He subsequently married a Jewish woman from Crete.[545] This is

[538] Ezra 9:8–9 and 3 Ezra 8:75–79.

[539] 3 Ezra 8:85, μὴ εἶναι ἐγκατάλειμμα καὶ διασῳζόμενον ('so that there should be no remnant or escaping one') in Ezra 9:14.

[540] Similarly, Josephus omits God's threat to destroy the Hebrew people after they made the golden calf (Exod 32:10); he leaves out this story altogether.

[541] BJ 5.419.

[542] V 414–415.

[543] BJ 3.409–410; see also Bilde, 53.

[544] V 426.

[545] V 427.

the only woman he explicitly refers to as Jewish. The only one of his wives of whom we do not know whether she was Jewish is the one he divorced because of her character.

'Doing things deserving death' is a common expression in both Greek and Jewish literature.[546] Philo uses the phrase in several passages.[547] Josephus uses it only once more, namely in AJ 6.315: David rebels against Saul's army, saying that they did things deserving death. In the Septuagint the phrase does not occur.

3. *The goodness of God*

A search in the TLG for the expression χρηστότης θεοῦ, 'goodness of God', shows that the expression was used especially after the first century CE. From the second century onwards the expression occurs often in Christian sources (58 hits in the TLG). This specific word group, however, occurs in only three places before the second century. The first is in Philo's *De migratione Abrahami* 122; 'goodness' does not have a clear-cut meaning here: "the wise Abraham, who had had experience of God's goodness in the past, believes that even if all other things are destroyed, still a small fragment of virtue would be preserved". The second instance is the present text in Josephus; and the third is in the New Testament, in the Letter to the Romans, which says that God will be good to those who stay true to his goodness and stern to those who fall.[548] Searching for 'your goodness' gave another hit, the *Prayer of Manasseh* 11.[549] This text comes closest to Josephus' use in Ezra's prayer. After having confessed the evil things he has done, like worshipping idols, the author says: "And now behold, I am bending the knees of my heart before you and I am beseeching your goodness (χρηστότητος)". Like Ezra's request for the sinful men, Manasseh asks for God's goodness to forgive the sins he has committed.

In Josephus' work the word χρηστότης occurs 22 times; only twice, however, does it refer to the goodness of God. Besides our passage, the

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[546] See for example Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.30; Plato, *Gorgias* 481a; Lysias, *Oratio* 22.2 and Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1412b.

[547] Philo, *De fuga et inventione* 74, 93; *De vita Mosis* 2.217; *De specialibus legibus* 3.142, 153; *De virtute* 139 and *De legatione ad Gaium* 341.

[548] Rom 11:22.

[549] Some manuscripts also have the expression in 7b (probably because of the extended Syriac version): "You Lord, according to the goodness of your grace, promised forgiveness". However, if one follows the short Greek LXX-text, the word occurs only once.

other instance happens to be a prayer as well: the prayer by Izates.[550] Izates refers to God's goodness in connection with his conversion to Judaism, saying: "If it is not in vain (…) that I have tasted[551] your goodness and that I have rightly considered you as the only and first lord of all, then come as ally (…)".

XXIV. Nehemiah Pleading for His Countrymen: AJ 11.162

> Nehemiah, having pity on the misfortune of his countrymen, wept; and looking up to heaven he said: "How long, O Lord, will you look away while our people is suffering these things, [our people] which has thus become the prey and spoil of all?"

Early on in both the Bible and the *Antiquitates* accounts, Nehemiah, the cupbearer of the king of Persia, prays to God, asking him to put an end to the suffering of the Jewish people.[552] This comes about as follows. Nehemiah meets some of his countrymen and asks for news of the people in Judea. The men reply that the situation is very bad and that the walls of Jerusalem have been torn down. When he hears this Nehemiah is very upset and begins to pray.

The biblical text gives a prayer of considerable length,[553] which Josephus shortened to a single sentence. The biblical account also says that Nehemiah mourned for days and fasted and prayed day and night. In *Antiquitates*, by contrast, the prayer is occasional and it is interrupted by a royal servant calling him to work. Its incidental nature notwithstanding, however, the prayer is one of the few in Josephus' works that is recorded in direct speech.

While Nehemiah is serving at the king's dinner, the king asks him why he is looking so sad. Nehemiah tells the king about his concern for the Jewish people in Judea and asks permission to go there to help them. Before making this request, however, he prays to God a second time.

In the biblical account Nehemiah tells the king what is troubling him and then the king asks him what he wants. Nehemiah then says a prayer, after which he asks the king permission to go to Judea. The content of the prayer Nehemiah says before making his request is not given. In *Antiquitates* Josephus coalesces Nehemiah's explanation for his

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[550] Izates, AJ 20.90.
[551] On this particular expression, see the discussion of Izates' prayer, pp. 204–205.
[552] Neh 1:1–2:10; AJ 11.159–167.
[553] Neh 1:5–11.

sadness and his request for permission to go to Judea, and the content of the prayer is given. Nehemiah asks God to give the request he is about to make "some measure of grace and persuasiveness".[554] Josephus evidently felt it necessary to explain Nehemiah's purpose in praying before making his request.[555]

Nehemiah asks God to make him persuasive.[556] The individuals in Josephus' works who possess this quality are Abraham, Moses and Joshua, all of whom are described as being persuasive in a positive way. Besides Nehemiah,[557] Esther also asks God to make her persuasive.[558]

The king gives Nehemiah permission to go, for which he is very grateful. In *Antiquitates* Nehemiah thanks both the king and God, and the following day he is given letters from the king that ensure him a safe journey. In the Bible he is given the letters right away and leaves at once.

The story in *Antiquitates* is tighter than that in the Bible. Both the prayer and the statements of the king and Nehemiah are briefer and more to the point; moreover, Josephus speeded up the narrative tempo. After hearing about the situation in Judea Nehemiah pauses to pray, but he is interrupted by someone telling him that the king wants to have dinner, at which dinner Nehemiah makes his request. In the Bible the time sequence is much slacker. Nehemiah prays for days, and his talk with the king seems temporally distant from Nehemiah's prayer for the Jewish people. One might surmise that the king did not notice Nehemiah's sadness for many days, perhaps weeks. Josephus shortened the time span and adjusted events to tighten up the story.

A. *The prayer*

The first thing one notices in comparing the biblical prayer with the prayer in *Antiquitates* is how much shorter Josephus' is. Josephus summarised eight verses of the biblical text in a single sentence. This is fully in line with his treatment of the Nehemiah material as a whole. The Book of Nehemiah consists of 13 chapters, which Josephus retold

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[554] Nehemiah asking for persuasiveness, AJ 11.165.

[555] See also the discussion of Samuel's prayer at Mizpah, p. 137.

[556] According to Thucydides this is one of the qualities of the ideal statesman, Thucydides 2.60.

[557] For a more detailed discussion of persuasiveness see Feldman, *Josephus's*, 104–105.

[558] Esther, AJ 11.231–233, see pp. 198–199.

in 25 sections. Comparing this to the Book of Ezra, for example, which consists of 10 chapters and is retold by Josephus in 158 sections, and the Book of Esther (10 chapters in the Bible and 113 sections in *Antiquitates*), it is obvious that Josephus chose to retell the whole of Nehemiah in a particularly terse manner. Shortening the prayer is part of this. For this reason I do not think it necessary to consider intensively the things Josephus left out of Nehemiah's prayer with respect to the biblical text. It is fairly certain that he simply wrote a new prayer without deliberately excising specific content from the biblical prayer.

The point of agreement between the biblical prayer and Josephus' is the request to God to bring an end to the suffering of the Jews in Judea. In the biblical prayer Nehemiah confesses the sins of the people, but also reminds God of his promise to Moses that if they turned to him again they would be brought to a chosen place. He reminds God that they are his servants, and that he should therefore help them. In *Antiquitates* Nehemiah asks God how long he will continue to ignore their suffering. While the request is again for God to stop the suffering, Josephus made the nature of the misery more explicit, characterizing it by saying that the Jews have become prey and spoil for everyone. The sinfulness of the people is not mentioned at all, and responsibility for their suffering is thus removed from their shoulders.

XXV. Mordecai and Esther: AJ 11.229–230 & 11.231–233

> (229) And Mordecai made the people fast according to Esther's orders and he himself besought God not to overlook his people now that they were threatened with destruction, but like he often before took care of them and forgave their sins, to rescue them now as well from the proclaimed destruction. (230) For he said that they were running the risk of dying inglorious not because they did anything wrong, but—for He himself knew[559] the cause of Haman's anger—"because I did not prostrate myself, Lord," he said, "nor could I bring myself to give him this honour which I gave you, for he is angry and has organised these things because we do not transgress your laws". (231) And the multitude sent forth the same cry, calling upon God to provide their safety and to rescue the Israelites

[559] The Niese text has εἰδέναι but gives εἶναι as a variant in three manuscripts, which would change the translation into "Mordecai was the cause of Haman's anger"; given the parallel in the apocryphal text that God *knows* why the situation is like this, εἰδέναι seems the original version to me. However, it cannot be excluded that an editor changed Josephus' εἶναι into εἰδέναι, because he knew the biblical text.

> in the whole country from the impending disaster, for they had it before their eyes and were awaiting it.
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> And Esther besought God as well in the manner of the ancestral law, throwing herself to the ground (232) and putting on mourning clothes and refraining from food, drink and pleasant things. She asked God for three days to have pity on her and, when she was seen by the king, to make her seem persuasive when pleading and to make her body more beautiful than before; (233) in order that she could ward off the anger with both if the king would be angered by her in any way; and in order that she might function as a spokesperson of her countrymen in utter distress; and [she asked] that the king would feel hatred for the enemies of the Jews and for the ones who would bring about their future destruction, if they would be neglected by him.

It is obvious that Josephus used the Septuagint version of the Book of Esther as a source for this story. The Septuagint contains some additions in comparison to the Hebrew text. These additions include the prayers in the story.[560] Josephus does not change the order of events as they occur in the Septuagint.

The stories in *Antiquitates* and LXX Esther are almost identical.[561] Artaxerxes, the Persian king, has banished his wife because she refused to obey his orders. When Artaxerxes organises a contest to find a new wife, Mordecai, a Jew, sends his niece Esther and she wins the contest. On the advice of her uncle Esther withholds her Jewish identity. After the marriage Mordecai comes to hear about two eunuchs plotting against the king. He tells Esther about this and she warns the king, who has the eunuchs crucified. Mordecai's act is written down in the chronicles.

Then a problem arises for Mordecai. The prime minister, Haman, expects everyone to bow down when he passes by, but Mordecai refuses to do this. Haman is angry and asks Mordecai where he comes from, to which Mordecai replies that he is a Jew. Thereupon Haman decides to punish all the Jews and gets the king to sign an order decreeing that all the Jews in the country and abroad are to be massacred. When Mordecai hears this he goes into mourning and tells the other Jews in the town about the disaster. He positions himself at the gate of the palace and contacts Esther, asking her to plea with her husband for her people. Esther agrees to do this and asks Mordecai to make the people

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[560] Add Esth 4:17^{a-z}.

[561] AJ 11.184–288 and Esther 1:1–10:3 (which is the complete book).

fast. At this point in the story the Septuagint adds prayers by Mordecai, the people and Esther. This is done by Josephus also.

After three days of praying Esther goes to the king and invites him and the prime minister to a dinner party. She is fearful about going to see him because, as Josephus has related earlier, the king has decreed that no-one may approach his throne unless summoned. Anyone disobeying will be put to death. The king is angry first, but when he sees Esther's fear he changes his mind (something that, according to Josephus,[562] occurs through the will of God), and he stretches out his wand. This romanticising of the story is also an addition made in the Septuagint, eagerly taken over and heightened by Josephus, who clearly liked to romanticise his stories.[563]

The king accepts the invitation but at the dinner Esther increases the suspense by postponing her request to a second dinner the next evening. At the second dinner, Esther tells the king that she herself is Jewish and that her people will be killed; she begs him to prevent this disaster. Artexerxes asks who organised this, whereupon Esther points at Haman. The king sentences Haman to death and at the request of Esther writes a letter to the leaders of all the other countries (from India to Ethiopia) revoking his decree. This is the second added letter. The rest of the story describes how the Jews in all countries took their revenge, killing thousands of people. Josephus is short about this, though he does mention some details.

The additions in the Septuagint consist of a dream of Mordecai's, two recorded letters of king Artaxerxes, the prayers, Esther's visit to Artaxerxes before the invitation, and finally an explanation of the dream. Of these only the dream at the beginning and its explanation at the end are omitted by Josephus. Both Feldman and Gnuse maintain that whereas in the dream the conflict between Haman and Mordecai "is put in terms of the eternal struggle of Gentile against Jew", Josephus portrayed Haman's anger more as a case of personal aversion than as an instance of a universal anti-Semitism.[564] This seems plausible: Josephus follows the text of Esther closely, but when he describes Haman's plan to kill all Jews he adds that Haman naturally hated the Jews "because his own

[562] AJ 11.237.
[563] Feldman, *Studies*, 519–520.
[564] Feldman, *Studies*, 530; Gnuse, *Dreams*, 185.

race, the Amalekites, had been destroyed by them".[565] The omission of the dream, however, does not necessarily belong to this individualising of Haman's anger. Here Feldman's arguments are unconvincing. The idea that with every word he wrote Josephus was thinking of his Roman patrons and the gentile world in which he lived may be true for *De bello Judaico*, which he wrote under Roman authority, but with regard to *Antiquitates* it seems less plausible. By the time of *Antiquitates* Josephus was no longer writing under the patronage of the Roman emperor but of Epaphroditus, who as a freedman would probably have been an outsider in Roman society. It is therefore most likely that Josephus himself was also an outsider at this time.[566] There would thus no longer have been any advantage for Josephus in walking on eggshells whenever he was writing something that concerned Jews and their enemies.

Discussing the Greek Book of Esther, Bickerman notes that there are four recensions of the Greek text. One of these, 'J', is based on Josephus' paraphrase of the story. Bickerman says that Josephus' *Vorlage* was probably the edition that was popular among the Jews in Rome at the end of the first century.[567] If this version indeed stands apart from the others known to us, then possibly the absence of the dream and its interpretation in *Antiquitates* can be explained from this angle. However, since Josephus' text is the only evidence for the existence of this recension, this theory is built on a somewhat shaky foundation.

The two letters of Artaxerxes, the first of which orders the massacre of the Jews and the second of which cancels this order, are taken over almost word-for-word by Josephus, as is Esther's visit.[568] The only parts of the Book of Esther, including the additions, which Josephus does not copy as closely as this, are the prayers. This is in line with the many other cases in which Josephus stuck to the storyline of his source but went his own way with the prayers that occur in it. These seem to be the moments at which he is able to add something expressive of his own outlook. By changing the prayers he was able to keep the original storylines intact while expressing his own opinions as to motives of the individuals described.[569]

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[565] AJ 11.211.
[566] Rajak, *Josephus*, 223.
[567] Bickerman, 'Notes', 104.
[568] First letter of Artaxerxes: AJ 11.216–219 (Add Esth 3:13^{a-g}); second letter: AJ 11.273–283 (Add Esth 8:12^{a-x}); Esther's visit AJ 11.234–241 (Add Esth 5:1–2^{b}).
[569] See Chapter 4.

A. *Mordecai's prayer*

The argument Josephus gives in this prayer is only slightly different from the argument in the Additions' prayer. The apocryphal Mordecai stresses the bond between God and the people of Israel, and flatters God by calling him almighty. No-one will oppose to God, God rules over everything and God knows everything. Josephus describes the bond between God and the Jews in the same way he did in many other prayers: he refers to God's taking care of the people, his *pronoia*, using the verb προνοεῖν.[570] The flattering of God, however, is not taken over by Josephus.

Many elements of the apocryphal prayer are incorporated in Josephus' version, although invariably Josephus gives them his own twist. For example, in the Additions Mordecai says: "You know that it was not in insolence or pride or for any love of glory that I did this". Josephus changed this into the statement that God knows the reason for Haman's anger.[571] Likewise Josephus changed Mordecai's statement that he does not want to set Haman's glory above God's into "nor could I bring myself to give him this honour which I give you".[572]

The most important insertion Josephus made, apart from the theme of God's *pronoia*, is the pressure Mordecai puts on God: "if you will not help us, we will die inglorious; Haman is angry not because we did anything wrong, but because we did not want to transgress your laws, so it is your duty to help us". This pressure is similar to that in Amram's prayer, which asks God not to punish his people "who did not make any transgression regarding the religious worship of him".[573]

B. *The prayer of the people supporting Esther*

Whereas the Additions says only "And all Israel cried out mightily, for their death was before their eyes", Josephus fleshed out this prayer, as he did in many other cases.[574] The content of Josephus' prayer is quite standard and again contains the verb προνοεῖν, stressing the relationship of the Israelites with God. The people do not, however, refer to God's providence in the past but ask God to provide safety for them now.

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[570] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.
[571] Add Esth 4:17[d] and AJ 11.229.
[572] Add Esth 4:17[e] and AJ 11:229.
[573] See the discussion of Amram's prayer, pp. 83–84.
[574] See the discussion of Samuel's prayer at Mizpah, p. 137.

The Jews even ask for the rescue of all the Israelites across the world, referring to the letter Artaxerxes sent to the kings and satraps in the surrounding regions. This again stresses the unity of the Jewish people, as we saw Josephus doing in *Contra Apionem*.[575]

C. *Esther's prayer*

The prayer in *Antiquitates* is completely different from the one in the Additions. The Additions' prayer is much longer and is less self-centered than the prayer Josephus provides.

In the Additions, Esther refers to past actions of God and the bond between him and the Jewish people. Three important themes are dropped by Josephus. The first is expressed in Esther's statement that "ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family" how God chose the Jewish people, and fulfilled all his promises he made to them.[576] Apart from the fact that Josephus leaves out the election aspect (and here does not even replace it with the *pronoia* theme), he also leaves out that Esther *learned* her whole life about God's special bond with Israel. Perhaps Josephus did this because the prayer concerns Esther's fear of going to the king rather than the relationship between the Jewish people and God, which is what Mordecai and the people are praying for. Esther's prayer is more self-centered.

The second thing Josephus left out is the history Esther sums up. In the Additions' prayer she summarises the history of the Jewish people since their exile. They were handed over to their enemies (the Babylonians) because they worshipped idols and then were slaves of these enemies. And their enemies now want to harm them even further. This whole reference to the past is omitted by Josephus, probably because he thought it was insufficiently relevant at this point and that a long prayer here would excessively slow down the pace of the narrative.

Finally, whereas Josephus stressed to a considerable degree Mordecai's faithfulness to the Jewish customs by showing him refusing to bow to a man, he did not stress Esther's faithfulness in this regard to the same degree. He left out the part in her prayer where Esther explains how she abstained from luxury and joy, how she refused to eat from Haman's table and how much she hated having sex with the king. Josephus

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[575] See pp. 37–39; see also the discussion of Onias' prayer, pp. 201–202.
[576] Add Esth 4:17[m].

probably left this out because it rather strains credibility that Esther could have acted and felt in this way and yet managed to keep her Jewish identity secret.[577] Leaving out Esther's hatred of sexual intercourse with the king is also part of Josephus' romanticisation of the story and his portrayal of the love between Esther and the king.

Instead of this, Josephus made the prayer more personal by adding two features. First, instead of asking "to put eloquent speech" in her mouth, Josephus' Esther asks to be persuasive.[578] Along with this she asks to be so beautiful that the king might be seduced by her. This again is in line with Josephus' tendency in the rest of the story to romanticise the relationship between Esther and the king. The reference to Artaxerxes as a lion is omitted by Josephus. The second feature added by Josephus is that Esther says she wants to function as a spokesperson for her people, whereas in the Additions she merely asks to be saved from her fear.

XXVI. Onias: AJ 14.24

> O God, king of the universe; because they who are standing with me now are your people, and those who are besieged are your priests, I ask you not to listen to those people against these, nor fulfil what these people ask against those.

This is the first prayer in the list which falls outside the biblical part of *Antiquitates*. The story of Onias is not given in the corresponding section of *De bello Judaico*.[579] Let us first look at the context of this prayer. John Hyrcanus II has been appointed high priest by his mother. His brother Aristobulus is displeased at this and marches against him. Hyrcanus surrenders, and comes to an agreement with his brother. Aristobulus can have the power and Hyrcanus will be allowed live a quiet life in peace. However, Hyrcanus' friend Antipater is of a different mind. He attempts to persuade Hyrcanus to go to Aretas, the Arab king. Eventually Antipater succeeds in this, and at Petra Hyrcanus asks Aretas to reinstall him in Jerusalem, saying that if he is restored to the throne

[577] See also Bickerman, 'Notes', 125.

[578] For a discussion of this request see the discussion of Nehemiah's prayer pleading for his countrymen, pp. 191–192.

[579] AJ 14.19–28 is parallel to BJ 1.125–126.

he will return to Aretas the cities and territory once taken from him by Hyrcanus' father.[580]

Aretas agrees to this proposal and marches against Aristobulus. Aristobulus sees he is defeated and all his people desert to the side of Hyrcanus. Aristobulus flees to the temple, accompanied only by the priests. Outside Jerusalem, Aretas, Hyrcanus and the Jews press the attack vigorously. At this point Onias appears on the scene.[581] Josephus introduces him as a righteous Jew, loved by God, who once rescued the people from drought by asking God to send rain. He had been in hiding, but now that he has emerged he is asked by the Jews besieging Jerusalem to put a curse on Aristobulus and the priests. The peace-loving Onias refuses to do this, however, so the besieging Jews try to force him using violence. At this point he says the prayer, avoiding taking sides.

After the prayer the angry Jews stone Onias to death. Josephus clearly disapproves of their behaviour and tells how God punished these men in the following way. During the Passover Aristobulus and the priests had asked for sacrificial victims. The Jews outside demanded that they pay for these, which the priests do. But the besiegers do not hand over the animals. The priests begin to pray "to exact satisfaction on their behalf for their countrymen".[582] Then God causes a great storm which destroys the harvest, with the result that wheat became very expensive.

It is strange that when Josephus says God punished the besieging Jews for killing Onias, the punishment he describes is directly connected with another offence they have committed. However, the fact that Josephus relates the punishment to the killing of Onias does show how important the Onias episode was for him.

Onias is also mentioned in Rabbinic literature, where he is known as Honi the Circle Drawer.[583] His story is told only in m.*Taanit* 3:8, but there are some further references to him. The story summarised by Josephus, about Onias' praying for rain, is described extensively in m*Taanit* 3.[584] However, of the prayer discussed here and Onias' being stoned to death nothing is mentioned; Josephus is our only source for these events.

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[580] AJ 14.4–18.
[581] AJ 14.22.
[582] The priests accompanying Aristobulus, AJ 14.28.
[583] For a more detailed discussion of Honi or Onias, see Vermes, 69–72.
[584] Derenbourg, *Essai*, 112–113.

A. *The prayer*

1. *The invocation*

This is the only prayer in which God is invoked with the word βασιλεύς, 'king'. As we will see in Chapter 6, Josephus normally uses the word δεσπότης, 'lord'.[585] In this prayer, Josephus uses the expression βασιλεὺς τῶν ὅλων, 'king of the universe', which is roughly equivalent to the (later) synagogal prayer formula מלך העולם. In Judaism it was common to call God 'king';[586] however, Josephus almost never does so and the few occasions on which he does are all prompted by the biblical text.[587] It may be that Josephus puts this expression into Onias' mouth on account of the prayer's context—the two brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus fighting over the kingdom.[588]

2. *The request*

Onias requests God not to fulfil the besiegers' prayers. This is the only instance among all the prayers in Josephus in which a negative request of this kind is made. While there are prayers which ask for harm to be done to someone else,[589] there is no other prayer in which God is specifically asked to ignore a request made by someone else.

The real interest of this prayer, however, lies in the stress placed on the importance of unity. As Onias prays, the strife is between "your people" and "your priests". Onias does not want one to destroy the other, because both are people of God and they should be united. Colautti connects this with the fact that the event takes place during the celebration of Passover. Passover, he says, has a connection to the system of government, as is shown by the several instances in which Josephus mentions the feast at times when there is a change of government.[590] At this point this is the case since it is the beginning of Roman presence in Palestine. The people are disunited at this time, as is shown especially by Onias' prayer, and this is the reason the traditional way of ruling the nation will come to an end and the people will be taken into slavery.[591]

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[585] See pp. 257–258.

[586] See for example SibOr 3.499, 560, 717, 808; 2 Macc 7:9; 13:4; 3 Macc 2:2, 9; Sir 51:1; Tob 13:2–18.

[587] Schlatter, *Wie*, 11.

[588] Colautti, *Passover*, 92.

[589] See also the list of prayer subjects in appendix 2.

[590] For example the celebration of Passover after the entrance of the promised land (AJ 5.20–21), and the Passover which is celebrated after the exile (AJ 11.66, 110).

[591] Colautti, *Passover*, 96.

Whether the reference to Passover is this deliberate is not certain. However, the Passover is fundamental to the identity of the Jews, and therefore it relates to unity and harmony. 'Unity' obviously plays an important role in this story, and Onias' prayer is used to stress this.

XXVII. Izates: AJ 20.90

> If it is not in vain, oh master and lord, that I have tasted[592] your goodness and that I have rightly considered you as the only and first lord of all, then come as ally, not only because of me, to punish my enemies, but also because they have offended your power.[593]

Izates is the king of Adiabene, a district in the north of Mesopotamia. Together with his mother he converts to Judaism and even has himself circumcised. His brother sees the increasing popularity Izates enjoys as a result of this and also wants to become a Jew. However, when this reaches the ears of the high nobles among their subjects, the nobles become very worried and try to prevent Izates' brother from converting by getting the Arabs to attack Izates. The Arabs do this, but in the end Izates defeats them. However, the nobles do not give up and turn next to the Parthian king Vologeses. Vologeses does not want to attack Izates without apparent just cause and thus, to create a pretext, he asks Izates to return the awards of honour that his (Vologeses') father had bestowed on Izates, threatening that if Izates refuses to do this he will start a war. Izates knows that whatever decision he makes will make no difference and therefore he decides to place his trust in God. He hides his wives and children, and his harvest, and sets fire to his fields. Then he waits.

The Parthians arrive and send a messenger to tell Izates how strong is the force he will be up against, and that even his god will not be

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[592] ἐγευόμην is a conjecture made by Warmington to replace the ἐγενόμην, which is in the codexes. I consider this conjecture correct: by this emendation the sentence becomes better translatable as the expression known from Psalms 'tasting God's goodness'. Considering the relatively uncommon usage of the verb γεύειν as opposed to γίγνεσθαι, I think it is very possible that copyists changed the supposedly original ἐγευόμην into ἐγενόμην.

[593] In the *editio princeps* there is an addition: "and have not shuddered to utter big talking". I consider this sentence not to be original, since I do not think a copyist would leave the sentence out if it had been present in the original text. However, the possibility of oversight by *homoio-teleuton* of κατατετολμήκασιν and πεφρίκασιν cannot be ruled out.

able to save him. Izates replies that he knows how strong they are, but that he is still convinced that God is stronger than all mankind. Then he turns in supplication to God, fasting together with his wives and children, and calling upon God with the prayer to be discussed here.

God hears Izates' prayer and the next night Vologeses receives a letter saying that the Parthians have been attacked and plundered by a great force of Dahae and Sacae. Vologeses withdraws and, so Josephus says, "Thus by the providence of God Izates escaped the threats of the Parthian".[594]

Josephus obviously approves of Izates' way of handling the situation. In 20.48 he had already said: "For although Izates himself and his children were often threatened with destruction, God preserved them, opening a path to safety from desperate straits. God thus demonstrated that those who fix their eyes on him and trust in him alone do not lose the reward of their piety". It is obvious that trust in God was an important thing in Josephus' eyes.

Josephus' account of Izates attracts scholarly attention with regard to both its narrative and style, for the reason that it is long (80 sections) and stands completely apart in the 20th book of *Antiquitates*.[595] Evidently it was of some importance for Josephus to include this story in his history. Moreover, twice in his account Josephus mentions that he will write later about certain actions of the royal family, promises he does not keep however.[596]

Apart from some later Rabbinical texts, no other source writes about Izates in this personal way. It is possible that Josephus wrote the story from memory since he must have known the members of the Adiabene royal family personally.[597] If that is so, then it is all the more interesting that he attributes a prayer to Izates.

A. *The prayer*

Izates' prayer is noteworthy on three counts. Firstly, it is the only extensive prayer in *Antiquitates* by a pagan convert to Judaism; secondly, it is

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[594] AJ 20.17–96.

[595] See also Feldman's footnote to AJ 20.17 in the LCL edition.

[596] AJ 20.53 and 96. Josephus does not say when or where he will write about it: later on in *Antiquitates* or in a work that still has to be written. See also Feldman's footnotes *ad locc*.

[597] Neusner, 'Conversion', 60.

one of the very few in the extra-biblical part of Josephus' work; and thirdly, it is one of the few in direct speech.

1. *The invocation*

Although the invocation δέσποτα κύριε, 'master and lord', does not sound special, it is in fact so. In contrast to the Septuagint, where κύριος, 'lord', is commonly used to designate God and to represent the Tetragrammaton,[598] Josephus uses the word only twice in relation to God. Moreover, Izates' prayer is the only instance where Josephus chooses to use the word when speaking in his own voice, since the other instance is a citation (the only explicit scriptural citation Josephus makes). In AJ 13.68 he cites Isaiah 19:19: "There shall be an altar in Egypt to the lord God (κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ)".

Evidently, κύριος was not a word Josephus wanted to associate with God. According to Fischer, the reason for this was that κύριος was the translation of the Tetragrammaton in Greek. As it was prohibited to pronounce this Hebrew word, Josephus abstained from mentioning the Greek equivalent. Instead, he preferred to use δεσπότης, which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew אדני, *adonaj*, the substitute word for the Tetragrammaton.[599]

The solution to the question that then arises, as to why Josephus chose to use κύριος as the invocation in Izates' prayer, may lie in the fact that Izates was a convert. As will be discussed below, Josephus used other specifically biblical terminology in the prayer as well. Perhaps, in having Izates call upon God with this emotionally charged word, Josephus intended to stress the unconditional nature of Izates' conversion.

2. *Tasting God's goodness*

If the textual conjecture put forward by Warmington is correct, then Josephus used here an expression which can also be found in Psalms, "tasting the goodness of God".[600] In Psalm 33 it says: "taste (γεύσασθε) and see that the Lord is good (χρηστός); blessed is the man who takes refuge in him".[601] The fact that this expression survived in tradition is shown by its use in 1 Peter 2:3, where the readers of the letter are

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[598] Fischer, 'The Term', 132, 136.

[599] Fischer, 'The Term', 138.

[600] On the use of the word 'goodness', see the discussion of Ezra's prayer about mixed marriages, pp. 190–191.

[601] Ps 33:9 (LXX).

summoned to rid themselves of evil things and crave purity "once you have tasted that the Lord is good". Similar is Hebrews 6:4–5, with the reference to those who once "tasted the good word of God". Although this is not completely identical, it suggests that the expression in Psalm 33:9 was used in the early Christianity.[602]

The expression does not occur in ancient Greek literature and can therefore be considered specifically Jewish. By putting such biblical language into the mouth of Izates, Josephus once again stressed the completeness of Izates' conversion to Judaism.

3. *The first God*

As we saw in our discussion of the Israelites' prayer at Mount Carmel, there were several ways to refer to God's uniqueness. One could say 'the one God', 'the true God' or 'the only God'. Here we see another way of saying this: 'the *first* God'. Izates even says "the only and first" God, which seems a contradiction in terms. There are several ways this use of πρῶτος (first) can be explained. One is that Josephus (through the mouth of Izates) meant to indicate that God is first in time, existing before anything or anyone else. Another, and more likely possibility is that this was a formula that was often used to praise God, and was residual from the time when the Jews had a monolatric conception of God, considering him first in rank, that is the most important of all gods.[603]

4. *Do not offend God*

Although there is of course no biblical parallel for this prayer, there is a biblical text—a prayer by king Hezekiah in 2 Kings[604]—that should be looked at here on account of the similarities in both prayer text and storyline. Hezekiah prays to God because he is about to be attacked by Sennacherib, the Assyrian king. He urges God to help him, mentioning that Sennacherib has sent "words to insult the living God". Another similarity to the Izates story is that in the event the attack by Sennacherib is called off because, as is said in 2 Kings, an angel of God put

[602] Michaels, *1 Peter*, 90.

[603] For a discussion of the use of such speech see also the discussion of the Israelites' prayer at Mount Carmel, p. 175.

[604] 2 Kgs 19:15–19: this prayer has a parallel in *Antiquitates* (Hezekiah concerning Sennacherib, AJ 10.16), but this is only a short reference, as it is in 2 Chr 32:20. The whole prayer is also in Isaiah 37:16–20.

to death a regiment of 185,000 men of the Assyrian army, in consequence of which Sennacherib broke camp and withdrew.[605]

Asking God to punish people who have offended him is a feature of several psalms. For example in Psalm 79 the psalmist asks God to pour out his wrath upon the people who have invaded his [i.e. God's] inheritance and have desecrated his temple. In 79:12 it says: "Pay back into the laps of our neighbours seven times the reproach they have hurled at you, O Lord". Similar requests to punish people who have offended God are to be found in Psalm 59:13–14 ("For the sins of their mouths, for the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride. For the curses and lies they utter, consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more (…)") and Psalm 74:10–11 ("How long will the enemy mock you, O God? Will the foe revile your name forever? Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand? Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!")

The same theme can be found in other texts. In Acts 12 Herod makes a speech which pleases the people very much. They call out that the voice they have heard was the voice of God and not of a man. "[I]nstantly, an angel of the Lord struck him down, because Herod did not give praise to God". The story in 3 Maccabees 1–2, about Ptolemy IV Philopator fits in here as well. When he is visiting Jerusalem, Ptolemy wants to visit the Temple, and wishes to enter the sanctuary, a place so holy that not even Jews are allowed to enter it. Everyone is in distress and the high priest Simon prays to God.[606] God then punishes Ptolemy by tossing him around and paralyzing him, thus preventing him from going into the Temple.[607] Finally, in 1 Enoch, Enoch relates how he went into the centre of the earth and saw a deep and dry valley between two mountains—the accursed valley, where the accursed will be gathered: "those who speak with their mouth unbecoming words against the Lord and utter hard words concerning his glory".[608]

Another example in Josephus' works is the prayer Moses says outside Datham's tent. Moses is speaking of Abiram and Datham, who offended God by saying that Moses cheated him in appointing Aaron

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[605] 2 Kgs 19:35–36 and 2 Chr 32:21–22.

[606] Strangely enough, Simon especially pities the people, who would be punished if a stranger entered the Temple; however, entrance of the sanctuary is seen as desecration of the place and thus offending God.

[607] 3 Macc 2:22.

[608] 1 En. 27:2.

high priest. Then Moses says: "And you will make your judgement upon them, because they rage against your honour, by removing them in no common manner out of existence".[609]

XXVIII. Josephus' Own Prayer: BJ 3.354

> Without being noticed he offered a prayer to God and said: "Because it seems good to you, who created the Jewish nation, to break[610] it, because all fortune has passed over to the Romans, and because you have chosen my soul to tell the future, I give myself willingly into the hands of the Romans and I will live; but I ask you as a witness[611] that I go away not as a traitor, but as your servant".

The context in which this prayer occurs is as follows. When the Romans capture Jotapata Josephus escapes and hides in a cave. Here he meets some rich Jewish citizens who are also hiding. Two men sent by Vespasian find the cave and ask Josephus to give himself up, but he does not trust them. Vespasian then sends Nicanor, an old acquaintance of Josephus', to convince him that he truly does not intend to trick him. At first Josephus still refuses to come, but when the soldiers get angry and try to set fire to the cave, he suddenly remembers a dream he once had in which God foretold to him the misfortune of the Jews and the fate of the Roman emperors. Since he himself is a dream interpreter, Josephus thinks it is his duty to convey this divine message to Vespasian. Therefore he decides to give himself up, and prays.[612]

After he has said his prayer he wants to go with Nicanor, but the Jews with him in the cave try to prevent him and suggest that killing himself were better than giving up a life of freedom. Thus Josephus, being of the opinion that it would be "a betrayal of God's commands, should he die before delivering the divine message", starts to speak to them as a philosopher, arguing how wrong it would be to commit

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[609] AJ 4.48.

[610] The text is obscure at this point. Manuscripts have different readings: a Leyden MS (quoted by Naber) has κολάσαι, of the verb κολάζειν, to punish; PAML have ὀκλάσαι, of ὀκλάζειν, to crouch down; the rest of the manuscripts have κλάσαι, of the verb κλᾶν, to break; the latter is used for this translation, following Thackeray; with regard to the meaning of the text there is no major difference between the three readings.

[611] For a discussion of God as a witness see the treatment of Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, pp. 113–114 and Chapter 6, p. 259.

[612] BJ 3.340–354.

suicide.[613] The other Jews are not persuaded however, but continue to fight. In the end Josephus proposes that they should all kill each other, determining who should kill who by drawing lots. This they agree to. In the event, however, Josephus survives the collective suicide (together with one other man whom he convinces to choose life over death) and goes with Nicanor to Vespasian.[614]

The prayer is said to have been λεληθυῖα εὐχή. Λεληθυῖα comes from λανθάνειν, meaning 'to escape notice'; in combination with a noun it means 'unnoticed'.[615] Josephus obviously means to inform his readers that no-one saw or heard him saying this prayer. This statement could mean one of two things. The first possibility is that he really did pray at this time and did not want to be seen by anyone while doing so. The second is that he did not in fact pray at that moment but wanted to safeguard against accusations of lying by people who were present and who might say that they did not see him pray.

Connected with this is the fact that neither the Jews who are with Josephus in the cave nor the Romans who are coming to take him away know Josephus' motive for wanting to surrender himself. He does not tell anyone about the revelation he has had and, as his prayer is said secretly: no-one is in a position to find out—except of course Josephus' readers. This surely is why Josephus incorporated this prayer—to justify his actions in the eyes of his readers.

Nowhere else does Josephus put a prayer into his own mouth. This prayer is, however, an important part of his own story. He surrenders to the Romans, a decision that will mark the rest of his life. From the fact that it is here of all places that he records a prayer of his own we may conclude that prayers were an important instrument for him. And he could use this prayer to achieve several ends: to justify his surrender, as was said above, but also to express his piety.

The prayer expresses Josephus' piety in two ways. First, he says that his surrender was no betrayal, but rather was what God truly wanted him to do. He was not following the orders of the Roman general

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[613] BJ 3.361–382.

[614] BJ 3.383–392. In *Vita* Josephus only refers to these events saying that he gave a detailed description of them in *De bello Judaico* (V 412).

[615] See also the discussion of Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, p. 112.

who came to take him, but the will of God.[616] Secondly, it shows that he preferred to explain his behaviour by way of a prayer rather than by way of a speech or an authorial remark. The tendency of *De bello Judaico* is that Josephus wants to convince the Jews that the Romans won the war because they served as an instrument of God; and with this he wants to convince them that further resistance is of no use. This prayer fits in very well with this purpose. With a specifically Jewish instrument, a prayer, Josephus connects directly with his Jewish public and shows them that the only right thing for him to do at that moment was to surrender himself to the Romans.[617]

Apart from the fact that this prayer fits into the literary framework of *De bello Judaico*, it also plays an important role from an autobiographical point of view, marking the transition from Josephus' Judaean life to his Roman one.[618]

A. *The prayer*

1. *The reasons*

Josephus gives three reasons for surrendering—*tricolon* again. The reasons themselves are highly interesting. The first is that "it seems good to you to break the Jewish nation"; the second that "fortune has passed over to the Romans"; and the third that "you chose my soul to tell the future". The three pillars of this prayer are the Jews, the Romans and Josephus himself. As we remarked at the end of the introduction, this prayer marks an important moment in Josephus' life—his transition from Judea to Rome. Apart from the position of the prayer in the narrative, its construction with these three elements also stresses this.

2. *The revelation*

In 351 Josephus had already written down the content of the revelation he now claims to remember: "the nightly dreams, in which God had foretold to him the impending fate of the Jews and the destinies

[616] See also BJ 3.361, where Josephus writes that it would be a betrayal of God's commands, should he die before delivering his message to Vespasian.

[617] For a discussion of this prayer in combination with Josephus' claims to be a prophet and a priest, see: T. Jonquière, 'Josephus at Jotapata: why Josephus wrote what he wrote', in: J. Pastor, M. Mor and P. Stern (eds.), *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History*, Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.

[618] See also Lindner, *Geschichtsauffassung*, 56.

of the Roman sovereigns". In the prayer, Josephus makes the meaning of these words explicit. The fate of the Jews is that their nation will be broken down and the destiny of the Roman sovereigns is that fortune has come over to their side.

The first part of the revelation was that it appeared good to God to break the Jewish nation. Josephus seems to excuse God for doing this, by saying that it was he who created the Jewish nation,[619] and that therefore it is his right to destroy it. Although it is not said explicitly at this point, throughout the rest of *De bello Judaico* Josephus shows that the reason for God's doing this is the wrongful actions of the Jewish rebels, who dishonoured, desecrated and polluted the Temple, did not keep the proper sacrifices, and appointed an illegitimate high priest.[620] In his speech to the Jews in 5.362–419 Josephus again refers to these sins of the rebels. It is because of these sins that God has decided to punish the Jews.[621]

The punishment of the Jews manifests itself in the fact that, as Josephus formulates it, "fortune (τύχη) has passed over to the Romans": whereas before it was the Jews who had all the luck, now it is the Romans who are on a winning streak. As it will turn out, the Romans will win the war and govern Judea.

The word τύχη is used by Josephus in different ways. Helgo Lindner has made an extensive study of the word.[622] What stands out from his survey is that the word is especially important in *De bello Judaico*, where it occurs 71 times, as opposed to 59 times in *Antiquitates*. Moreover, in *De bello Judaico* the use of the word is equally spread over all seven books, whereas in *Antiquitates* it occurs only 7 times in books 1–11 and, thus, mainly in the books concerning the post-biblical period—the same period as *De bello Judaico*.[623] Obviously, the word has a special meaning for Josephus in connection with the Hellenistic period, and in particular with the Jewish-Roman War.

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[619] κτίσαντι: this is the only prayer in which Josephus calls God κτίσας; for a discussion of God being called creator see the discussion of Isaac's blessing, pp. 68–69.

[620] See for example BJ 2.409–417; 4.386–388; 5.401–402 and 7.259–274.

[621] Gray, *Prophetic*, 38; see notes 4, 6 and 7 of this page for many passages on the accusations and the fact that God has abandoned the Jews and has chosen the Romans as the instrument with which to punish them.

[622] Lindner, *Geschichtsauffassung*, 42–48; 85–89; esp. 89–94.

[623] τύχη in *Antiquitates* 12–20: 14: 7x; 15: 6x; 16: 5x; 17: 7–8x; 18: 11–12x; 19: 11x; 20: 5x.

It is most probable that Josephus adopted this word from one of his great models, Polybius. Polybius seems to have thought of τύχη mostly as a "half-personalised and semidivine power that bends everything to its will".[624] However, although in Polybius' concept of history there was room for chance (τύχη), he also said that not everything should be attributed to it: anything that could be foreseen or controlled by humans was outside the realm of chance.[625] However, Josephus used the term in his own way, applying it to Jewish ideas, as he did often with other Greek expressions and concepts. From this and other texts in *De bello Judaico* it appears that, as in the prayer under consideration, τύχη is often used in cases of a change of government. Unlike Polybius, where τύχη is an autonomous principle, for Josephus τύχη is under the control of God and thus God is the one responsible for the rise of a new empire.

This is consistent with the Old Testament, and other Jewish texts, where God is the one who establishes and deposes rulers and empires.[626] In Jeremiah 27, for example, God says: "With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (…). All nations will serve him (…)".[627] Job 12:23 says that God "makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them". And, finally, two obvious examples from Daniel 2, concerning the story of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the statue which turns out to represent the different kingdoms that will rule the world. First, after having received the meaning of the dream, Daniel prays to God to thank him and says in his prayer that God "sets up kings and deposes them".[628] Then Daniel goes to the king and explains the various parts of the statue to him, ending with the golden head: "You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live,

[624] Von Fritz, *Theory*, 388. See for example Polybius 1.86.7; 2.4.3; 38.18.8.
[625] Von Fritz, *Theory*, 390. See Polybius, 36.17.1.
[626] Gray, *Prophetic*, 39. See also Rajak, *Josephus*, 99 and Cohen, 'Josephus', 366–381, 372–373.
[627] Jer 27:5.
[628] Dan 2:21. On Josephus' version of this prayer see the introduction to the discussion of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, p. 181.

he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold".[629] In extra-biblical Jewish literature we see this as well: in 4 Ezra 10–13 visions telling about God who arranges the governance of the world are described and explained.[630]

So Josephus often uses τύχη when speaking about the rise of a new sovereign. In *De bello Judaico* it is used with reference to the Roman conquest of Judea. As remarked earlier, for Josephus τύχη was of course not an autonomous principle but was under the control of God. In fact, from several passages it becomes clear that Josephus used τύχη as almost interchangeable with God.[631] This is most obvious in BJ 5.367, where Josephus comments that "Fortune, indeed, had from all quarters passed over to them, and God who went the round of the nations, bringing to each in turn the rod of empire, now rested over Italy". In BJ 6.399–400 a major Roman victory is ascribed to both God and fortune: "Here we may signally discern at once the power of God over unholy men and the fortune of the Romans". And, finally, Vespasian's rise to power is attributed twice to God and once to τύχη.[632]

Josephus says that God chose his soul to foretell the future. As he writes in the sections preceding this prayer, he considered himself suitable as a receiver of revelations, as he was of priestly descent, knew well the prophecies in the Bible, and was skilled in the interpretation of dreams and ambiguous utterances of God.[633] Probably Josephus chose to use the word ψύχη, 'soul', in this connection, because it sounded biblical: it is based on the Hebrew 'my soul', which is equivalent to 'me'.[634]

By means of this prayer, Josephus wants to ensure that people understand that he did not surrender for his own good, but that he did so because this is what God wanted him to do. He therefore tells about the revelation (which he almost seemed destined to receive, given his skills and education) and he says that he goes as God's servant, διάκονος θεοῦ. Josephus uses the words διάκονος and διακονία many times, to

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[629] Dan 2:37–38.

[630] See for example 4 Ezra 12:2: "In its last days the Most High will raise up three kings".

[631] Gray, *Prophetic*, 40; the references to illustrate this observation I owe to her as well.

[632] God: BJ 3.6 and BJ 5.2; τύχη: BJ 4.622. See also the speech of Agrippa, trying to persuade the Jews not to go to war: τύχη: BJ 2.360, 373, 387; God: BJ 2.390.

[633] BJ 3.352.

[634] Cf. Exod 12:16 and Hos 9:4; see also Lindner, *Geschichtsauffassung*, 54, n. 3.

express the subordination of a servant to his commissioner. When God is the commissioner, the word means 'priest'.[635]

There are other places in which Josephus sees himself as διάκονος θεοῦ. In 3.361, as an introduction to his speech aimed at stopping the Jews from committing suicide, he says that it would be a betrayal of God's commands if he died before delivering the message. In 3.400, when he is standing in front of Vespasian, he says that he comes as a messenger and was sent by God. Referring back to this moment, Vespasian later orders the release of Josephus, "the one who foretold my elevation to power and was a minister of the voice of God" (διάκονον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ φωνῆς).[636]

XXIX. Elisha Transforms the Water from a Spring: BJ 4.462–464

> (462) For he went to the source and threw into the stream a vessel made of potter's clay filled with salt, and thereafter stretching out his righteous right hand to heaven and pouring soothing libations onto the earth, he asked it [the earth] to soften the stream and to open sweeter springs; (463) and [he asked heaven] to mix fertile airs with the stream and to give the inhabitants at the same time plenty of fruits and succession of children, and not to let them lack the water productive of these things as long as they stayed righteous. (464) With these prayers and performing many ritual actions [lit.: doing lots of things with his hands out of skill], he changed the source.

This anecdote occurs in *De bello Judaico* as part of Josephus' account of the surroundings of Jericho. It is a biblical story which is not recorded in *Antiquitates*.[637] Feldman suggests that this omission may be due to Josephus' having considered *De bello Judaico* a better place to tell the story than *Antiquitates*, on the grounds of its anticipated Jewish public and the stranger and more extraordinary events it describes.[638] Here, however, I think Feldman overlooks the 20 years thought to have passed between the writing of *De bello Judaico* and that of *Antiquitates*. A more likely cause, in my view, of the story's omission in *Antiquitates* is Josephus'

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[635] For an extensive study of the word in Josephus' work see Lindner, *Geschichtsauffassung*, 60.
[636] BJ 4.626.
[637] AJ 8.352–354 and 9.28–94 and 178–183.
[638] Feldman *Studies*, 344–345.

general tendency in that book to pass over miracle stories.[639] The story's presence in *De bello Judaico* may be due to Josephus' source for the surroundings of Jericho having related the story, or to the story having been so closely linked to the region that it came to his mind when he was writing about it. This idea is supported by the fact that Josephus introduces the story (in 460) as a kind of legend, saying: "there is a story (λόγος ἔχει) that this spring…" He uses a similar phrase several sections later when he describes the land of Sodom and its former wealth, and how the city burned to the ground: "It is said that (φασὶ δ' ὡς), owing to the impiety of the inhabitants, it was consumed by thunderbolts".[640] At the end of the passage Josephus calls these stories about the present surroundings of Sodom μυθευόμενα, a word he uses four times in all, always with the meaning 'legend' or 'fable'.[641]

Although this passage is parallel to 2 Kings 2:19–22, *Antiquitates* differs from 2 Kings on several points, indicating that this biblical text was not Josephus' source for this passage. The differences include the stress laid on Elisha's justice, the remark that his action is motivated by gratitude, his pouring of libations, and the fact that he says prayers to earth and heaven instead of making the prophetic statement he does in 2 Kings ("Thus says the Lord").

Both Morton Smith and Seth Schwartz interpret this story about Elisha as an example of magic as it was performed by Graeco-Roman holy men. Almost all Elisha's actions point in this direction: stretching out his right hand (like a statue), pouring out libations, and praying to earth and heaven.[642] Schwartz argues that Elisha is presented as a hero and that he gives the spring supernatural powers, whereas in the biblical text he merely makes it become drinkable. Schwartz suggests that Josephus must be following a source here, because in general Josephus does not hellenise his biblical material in this way.[643] Considering the many differences between the biblical account and Josephus', I think Schwartz is surely right in thinking that Josephus used a source other than the Bible; I also think, however, that Josephus would have had no hesitation in altering a story to suit his own purposes if he considered it

[639] Feldman *Studies*, 568–570.
[640] BJ 4.484.
[641] BJ 4.485, 531; CA 1.229; 2.132.
[642] Smith, 'Occult', 254.
[643] Schwartz, *Josephus*, 33.

necessary. In any case, he must have found the source acceptable, or as Smith puts it, "congenial to his taste and useful for his purpose".[644]

A. *The prayer*

1. *Praying to heaven and earth*

The most remarkable thing about this prayer is that it is does not call upon God but rather upon heaven and earth. There are no other instances in Josephus' works of prayers making similar invocations, apart from the account of the Essenes, who are said to pray to the sun every morning asking it to rise.[645]

What does occasionally occur in Jewish literature is calling upon heaven and earth as witnesses. Isaiah calls upon heaven and earth at the beginning of his prophesy, saying: "Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken".[646] A song by Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is introduced with such words as well: "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth".[647]

According to Deuteronomy, heaven and earth were witnesses of the covenant, and for this reason they are often called upon when prophetical accusations are made against people who, it is prophesised, will break the covenant.[648] The same idea is presented in 2 Baruch, where God says that Moses appointed a covenant for the Jewish people and called "heaven and earth as a witness against them; for he knew that his time was short, but that heaven and earth will stay forever".[649] Another example occurs in Pseudo-Philo, in Moses' speech preceding his death, which is repeated by Joshua.[650]

However, whilst in all these cases heaven and earth are personified, they differ from the episode in Josephus in that in none of them is any power attributed to heaven or earth; nor is any prayer addressed to these. Deuteronomy 4:19 is very explicit on the issue: "And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and

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644 Smith, 'Occult', 254.
645 BJ 2.128, see pp. 54–55.
646 Isa 1:2.
647 Deut 32:1.
648 Tromp, *Assumption*, 173; Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28.
649 2 Bar. 19:2–3.
650 *L.A.B.* 19:4; 24:1.

worshiping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven". For this reason I think it is most probable that Josephus took the story from a (pagan?) source. Because, if we have to choose between the hypothesis that Josephus copied the story without rewriting it and the hypothesis that he added the prayers to heaven and earth himself, the first seems the more probable. For, given the short period of time in which *De bello Judaico* appears to have been written[651] and its Roman (thus pagan) patronage, Josephus may not have had time to rewrite the story. It is unlikely Josephus would have invented the pagan rituals in the story himself and then have attributed them to a righteous Jew such as he considered Elisha to be.

2. *Virtues*

As we have seen in other prayers, virtue is an important part of this story. Elisha's righteousness in particular is stressed by Josephus. Elisha is said to stretch out his "righteous" right hand, and he asks that the water may be good as long as the inhabitants of the region are "righteous". In Elisha's encomium in AJ 9.182 it is also said that he was widely known for his δικαιοσύνη, 'righteousness' or 'justice'.

Another quality related to virtue is 'gratitude', which is connected with the virtue of humanity, φιλανθρωπία. In *De bello Judaico* Elisha, transforms the water of the spring out of gratitude to the people of Jericho for their hospitality to him.

[651] V 361.

Appendix—Prayers by Non-Jews

In the Introduction to this book we suggested that the prayers in Josephus' work are expressions of Jewish religion and theology since most of the prayers by far are uttered by Jews and addressed to the Jewish God. However, there are nine prayers (or references to prayer) attributed to non-Jews which we would like to deal with in this appendix.

These nine so-called pagan prayers fall into two categories, those uttered by non-Jews and directed to the pagan gods and prayers by non-Jews addressed to the Jewish God. There are four prayers that surely belong in the former category: they are unmistakably directed at pagan gods. The first is in AJ 18: when Tiberius is ill, he wants to speak to his children before he dies and he wants to appoint one of them as his successor. After he has ordered Euodus, the highest-placed of his freedmen, to bring them the next morning, he prays "to his country's gods to show him some clear indication as to his successor as emperor".[652] In *De bello Judaico* there are two prayers by Vespasian and Titus together, both spoken as part of a ritual. The first is said on the morning of the triumph in Rome: a tribunal has been erected and in complete silence both men cover their heads and recite the customary prayers.[653] Later, after the execution of the Jewish rebel leader Simon ben Giora, Vespasian and Titus offer sacrifices which are "duly offered with the customary prayers".[654] One may be certain that Josephus meant that these three prayers were offered to "their own country's gods", as he says explicitly about Tiberius' prayer; the customary prayers by Vespasian and Titus are obviously part of a ritual and it is to be expected that at these very moments of celebration, for the conquest of Judaea and for the execution of a Jewish rebel, they perform their own religious rituals.

Then there is a prayer by the crowds in Rome: at the triumphal reception of Vespasian in Rome, the crowds pray with libations "that Vespasian might himself long be spared to the Roman empire, and that the sovereignty might be preserved unchallenged for his sons and their descendants throughout successive generations".[655] This prayer is most

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[652] Tiberius, AJ 18.211.
[653] Vespasian and Titus at the tribunal, BJ 7.128.
[654] Vespasian and Titus after the execution of Simon, BJ 7.155.
[655] Crowds in Rome, BJ 7.73.

likely addressed to their own gods. There are, however, two prayers by Romans that are not so obviously directed at pagan gods.

The first is a reference to prayers by Roman soldiers: Josephus relates how Jewish rebels raged against their own countrymen when they asked them to admit the Romans freely to the city; he says the rebels rushed "in arms and to such crime", that the roles were reversed; the Romans tried to stop the Jews from profaning their own sacred places. Because, so Josephus says, "of the soldiers there was not one who did not regard the Temple with awe and reverence and pray that the brigands might relent ere it met with irretrievable calamity".[656] Since it is the Temple in Jerusalem that Josephus is talking about it is not unlikely that the prayers he mentions are to be understood as prayers to the God to whom the Temple is dedicated that is, the Jewish God.

Another Roman prayer, presumably to the Jewish God, is a prayer by Titus. Besides the two instances mentioned above, in which he prays together with Vespasian, he also prays on his own once, in BJ 5.519, when he examines the dead bodies on the battlefield that have not been buried: he calls god as his witness (κατεμαρτύρατο τὸν θεόν) that this was none of his doing. Again, Josephus does not state explicitly to which god Titus prays, but it is possible that this is a reference to the Jewish God. Given the positive image he sketches of the Romans, and especially of Titus and Vespasian, it is possible that Josephus wanted to stress the goodness and willingness of Titus and the Romans by showing that the Roman leader called the Jewish God as his witness, as a Jew would have done, too.

The two latter prayers, especially, appear to have been introduced by Josephus with the specific purpose of presenting the Romans in a positive light, that is, compassionate towards the Jews and their religion. But there are also three prayers by non-Jews that are addressed to the Jewish God in the biblical material.

First, a prayer by Balaam; he is a pagan diviner who is consulted by the Moabite king Balak and a Madianite embassy. They want him to pronounce curses to exterminate the Israelites who are camping outside Jericho. Balaam, however, turns to God to ask what he thinks of this

[656] Roman soldiers, BJ 6.123.

request.[657] When God is opposed to the idea, he returns to the envoys saying that they should give up their intent, because the army they want him to curse "was in favour with God".[658] This sentence shows that Balaam consulted the God of the Israelites and not a pagan god of his own country; the biblical text is also clear about this: Balaam talks with the God (אֱלֹהִים) who protects the Israelites. However, the big difference between the biblical text and *Antiquitates* is that in Numbers it is God who has taken the initiative: he speaks to Balaam. This makes it sound less odd that Balaam talks to the Jewish God (God interferes because his people are in danger). Josephus made Balaam the initiator, which makes it more remarkable for this pagan diviner to turn to the Jewish God.

The two other prayers are by foreign kings: Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, both with a parallel in the biblical source text. Nebuchadnezzar's prayer is said after he has been living in the desert for seven years, because it was foretold that he would do so in a dream. After these seven years, Nebuchadnezzar prays to God that he be restored to his kingdom and so it comes about.[659] Josephus does not tell us to which God Nebuchadnezzar is praying, but the biblical text is clear. Nebuchadnezzar says, "Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified him who lives forever".[660] It is therefore most likely that Josephus refers to the Jewish God as well. Moreover, Daniel is the one who explained the dream to him and it came to pass as he said, so it is not illogical for Nebuchadnezzar to pray to Daniel's God.

And finally Darius, or rather a reference to a prayer of his in the past: when Josephus introduces Darius as the appointed king he refers to promises Darius made in the past saying, "While still a private citizen, he had vowed to God that, if he became king, he would send all the vessels of God which were still in Babylon to the Temple in Jerusalem".[661] Since it is again the Jerusalem Temple to which the text refers, it is most likely that the prayer is directed at this Temple's God as well.

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[657] Balaam, AJ 4.105. This is unlike the biblical text where there is no prayer, but merely a conversation, initiated by God (Num 22:9–11).
[658] AJ 4.106.
[659] Nebuchadnezzar, AJ 10.217.
[660] Dan 4:34.
[661] Darius, AJ 11.31; the same is said in 3 Ezra 4:43.

To sum up: there are nine prayers spoken by non-Jews, six of which are by Romans and three of which are in the biblical material, with almost identical parallels in their source texts. The most striking feature of these prayers is that five of the nine prayers appear to be directed at the God of the Jews; mostly this is indicated by the fact that each prayer concerns Jewish people (Titus and Balaam) or the Jewish Temple (the Roman soldiers and Darius).

As for the content, the prayers or references to prayer do not differ from the prayers by Jews in Josephus' work; the four prayers to pagan gods (Tiberius, the two prayers by Vespasian and Titus and the prayer by the Roman crowds) are all merely references.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PRAYERS IN THE TEXT

From the detailed analysis in the previous chapter it may be concluded that, most of the time, Josephus had a particular aim in mind when writing a prayer, since in none of the prayers with an identifiable source was the content the same as in the source text. Josephus' stories mostly follow the storyline of his source text, even if he adjusts some details now and then. His prayers, however, always differ. The prayers appear to have different functions in the text; in this chapter we shall define and list these functions in order to determine the ends to which Josephus employed the prayers.

The 32 prayers discussed in the previous chapter have been roughly classified according to function; each prayer may be listed under more than one function.[1] Since a subjective element is inevitable in any such categorisation, I do not claim that my list is in any way final, but I think it suffices to give a good impression of the variety of functions of the prayers in Josephus' work.

The list categorises the prayers on different though overlapping levels, according to literary functions and functions concerning content. The literary functions are as follows: (1.) for dramatic (or, in two cases, romantic) effect (seven stories); (2.) to mark a turning point (six times); (3.) to justify a particular action (only one of the 32 prayers); (4.) to give the story his own twist or to place a different emphasis within the story (six stories). But by far the most common use that Josephus makes of the

[1] These 32 are representative of all 134 prayers; the remaining 102 prayers more or less confirm the image that has been established from the list in this section: 27 of them are used for dramatic effect; only 2 mark a turning point; a slight twist is given to the story by 4 prayers; 12 prayers are used to portray character and 5 are used to express Jewish identity. In a large number of cases (41) the prayer has no special function, which seems to deviate from the percentage presented in the present section. However, the 102 prayers that remained undiscussed, were omitted for a reason: most of them are very short and there is sometimes hardly any difference with a possible biblical parallel; still, as we saw, 61 of these prayers do fall under the above categories. Eleven prayers were shortened versions of a biblical parallel; no function was attributed to these.

32 prayers investigated is to portray character: eighteen of them have this function (5.) As to content, Josephus used prayers to express either Jewish identity (6.) or his theological and philosophical ideas (7.)

I. No Special Function

Only two of the 32 prayers have no special function: although Josephus made his own version of the prayers, they hardly vary in content with regard to the biblical text. These prayers are the prayer by Samuel at Mizpah (AJ 6.25) and the prayer by Zerubbabel (AJ 11.64–65). Both prayers seem to be there just because there was a prayer in the biblical text. Of course Josephus would not be Josephus if he did not change anything, so he recast the contents of the prayers in his own words. However, nothing indicates that either serves a special purpose.

II. Literary Functions

A. *Dramatic (or romantic) effect*

Several prayers have been used by Josephus to dramatise his story: by adding a prayer or changing its content, he added suspense, tension or pathos to the story.

The first prayer in this category is the prayer by Moses at the Red Sea (AJ 2.335–337); this prayer serves two purposes: it portrays the character of Moses as leader, and it dramatises the story. The image of the Israelites standing on the shores of the Red Sea, all waiting in fear for the Egyptian army to catch up with them, is reinforced by that of Moses at prayer, stressing their hopelessness and asking God to rescue them.

Standing in front of the tent of Datham, Moses utters another dramatic prayer (AJ 4.40–50). This prayer serves to depict Moses as a righteous person, but it also dramatises the moment by the technique of *retardatio*: the very long prayer delays the moment that everyone knows will come: the punishment of the rebellious men by God. Moreover, the suspense is enhanced by the suggestion that Moses himself might be wrong and, if so, should be punished instead of the deserters: a suggestion that is not made in Numbers.[2]

[2] Num 16:28–30.

The whole story surrounding the birth of Samson has been thoroughly romanticised by Josephus, and he used the prayers of Manoah and his wife, among other devices, to do so (AJ 5.276, 280). He relates how Manoah prays to God every day for children because he loves his wife so much. When a very handsome angel appears to his wife alone and she tells him about it, he becomes jealous and he wants his wife to pray for the angel to appear again so he can see him as well. Manoah's love and jealousy are new to the story: Manoah's daily prayers for children are not mentioned in the biblical text, so the angel appears to his wife unasked. The second prayer is quoted in Judges,[3] but the identity of the supplicant and the motive are different; instead of his wife, it is Manoah who prays, and he does so not because he is jealous but only because he wants to know what to do once his son will be born.

Another prayer in this category is Hezekiah's prayer for a longer life (AJ 10.26). Special attention is drawn to his wish to have children, which dramatises the story and makes it more personal. In the biblical parallel, too,[4] Hezekiah asks for a longer life, beseeching God to remember his faithfulness and loyalty; he does not say why he wants to live longer, so it looks as though he is not yet ready to die. Josephus' Hezekiah, however, says why he wants to live longer: he wants to have children before he dies. By leaving out the reference to his faithfulness, and only mentioning his wish to have offspring, Josephus makes Hezekiah's wish (that is nowhere to be found in the biblical text) more compelling; it is even a reason for his worsening illness in *Antiquitates*. Moreover, Josephus says that God listened to his prayer because of this special request, which stresses it even more.

Like the story of Manoah and his wife, Josephus also romanticised the story of Esther, especially the love between Esther and the king. Esther's prayer (AJ 11.231–233) makes this abundantly clear. Whereas the prayer in the LXX version of Esther[5] exemplifies the ideal Jewish attitude (i.e. her Jewish education and the special bond between God and the Jewish people, summing up God's deeds in the past and stressing her own faithfulness by abstaining from unclean food and sex), Josephus rewrote the prayer as a much more personal request from Esther, leaving the prayer for the rescue of the Jewish people to Mordecai and the people (AJ 11.229–230, 231). Josephus' Esther is afraid to go to the

[3] Judg 13:8.
[4] 2 Kgs 20:3.
[5] Add Esth 4:17^{k-z}.

king, and therefore asks for persuasiveness and beauty; she wants to be the spokesperson of the Jewish people. Esther is more of a real person in *Antiquitates* than she is in the Bible, the love between Esther and her husband is underlined and the story is romanticised. Her prayer is one of the means by which this is expressed, while Mordecai's prayer is used to express the bond between God and the Jews, which is left out in Esther's prayer.

Onias' prayer (AJ 14.24) illustrates the story of the fight between the two brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. The short episode about Onias does not seem to add much to the whole story; his prayer is no catalyst for the events that follow, and even the punishment which Josephus says the angry Jews incurred for the murder of Onias is linked with another crime committed later. But Onias' prayer with its request to God to listen to *neither* party strongly dramatises the chaos that existed in and around Jerusalem in those days.

The prayer of Elisha (BJ 4.462–464) when he changes the water in a polluted spring into pure water is used to liven up Josephus' story about a region in the vicinity of Jericho. One special feature of the prayer, particularly in comparison with Josephus' other prayers, is that it does not stand in the context of a larger story: it has been isolated from the Elisha narrative and used only as an anecdote concerning the region that is being described.

B. *Marking a turning point*

This category concerns prayers that mark a turning point in the story at hand or even a turning point in history.

First, the prayer that Moses speaks at the burning bush when he accepts God's assignment to rescue the Hebrews from pharaoh (AJ 2.275). The prayer indicates Moses' decision to go and help his people in Egypt. He does so by asking God to allow him to experience, in Egypt, the power that has just been shown to him. In this way the prayer marks the moment he decides to change the life he imagined for himself previously and dedicate himself to the welfare of the Jewish people.

A prayer marking an important moment in history is the people's prayer at Mount Sinai (AJ 3.78); while Moses is on the mountain they practically ask God for the law and the ten commandments. In this way, Josephus stresses the moment in which the Jews receive the law.

By way of this prayer, Josephus also manages to give the story his own twist, as we will discuss later.

David's prayer for Solomon (AJ 7.380–381) marks an obvious turning point in the story and in history: the transfer of kingship from David to Solomon. Although this seems a most natural moment at which to pray for someone, in Josephus' work it is the only instance of a prayer marking the actual transition. The only prayer that comes near is connected with Solomon's kingship as well; in a prayer mentioned earlier, Banaias and the people prayed for Solomon, asking God to be gracious and grant that Solomon's reign might be a long one.[6]

By adding a few details to the prayer by the Israelites at Mount Carmel (AJ 8.343), after the contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal, Josephus stressed their public choice of the God of Israel. The biblical prayer confirmed that they had been swayed by Elijah's victory[7] but, by making the prayer longer and including their rejection of the other gods, Josephus drew special attention to their confession of faith, thus marking the moment.

Izates' prayer (AJ 20.90), although it does not mark the moment of his conversion, underlines his choice. By putting biblical language in his mouth and making him pin all his hope in God when he is about to be attacked by enemies, Josephus highlights his choice to become a Jew.

It is obvious that Josephus' own prayer (BJ 3.354) also marks a turning point: it marks his decision to surrender and go with Nicanor to Vespasian. It also marks the transition from his life as someone of priestly descent in Jerusalem to that of a foreigner and writer in Rome. However, it is the most important function of the prayer, justifying his decision, that we shall discuss now.

C. *Justification*

The prayer Josephus attributes to himself is the only one serving to justify a particular action. Of course there are prayers in which people confess their sins[8] or ask God to forgive certain actions,[9] but Josephus'

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[6] AJ 7.357.

[7] 1 Kgs 18:39.

[8] For example Samson, AJ 5.302; The people repenting, AJ 10.64.

[9] For example Cain, AJ 1.58; Moses at Elis, AJ 3.22–23; Moses and Aaron, AJ 3.310.

prayer is different; he is not asking God for forgiveness, but explaining to his readers why he is doing what he is about to do: surrender to the Romans. Josephus must have received much criticism by people who saw his action as desertion. He excuses himself by means of this prayer, saying that he is going to the Romans because God wants him to do so and because he has a task to fulfil for God by telling them about the revelation he has had. In this way he justifies his action: he did not betray his country or his convictions but, on the contrary, he went as God's servant.

D. *Twisting the story*

In seven cases a prayer appears to have been used to make a (slight) change to a story, or to place a different emphasis. As we have said before, Josephus mostly followed the storyline of his source text, but in some cases he managed to change some elements in it by inserting a prayer or by altering the content of an existing prayer.

His reasons for doing so appear to be diverse, depending on the story in question. In some cases the fresh angle creates a stronger image of the person praying, giving him (or them) the initiative in the story or making them appear more confident. In other cases such changes are intended to give more (or less) emphasis to a particular feature.

1. *Noah after the Flood (AJ 1.96–98)*

This prayer shows how Josephus, by incorporating a prayer into the story, makes Noah responsible for initiating the covenant, whereas in the Bible it is God who does so. According to the story in Genesis, as soon as the earth has dried up again after the Flood, Noah makes a burnt offering. The smell is pleasing to God and he responds to it by speaking to Noah and making certain promises—the famous covenant between God and man. However, an important addition in *Antiquitates* is the prayer Noah utters in addition to offering the sacrifice. This prayer and the request Noah makes in it, elicit a reply from God granting what Noah asked: never to destroy the earth again, which is exactly what the biblical covenant is about. Noah is thus seen to be the initiator of the covenant in *Antiquitates*, and not, as in Genesis, God himself.

The sacrifice is referred to in both Genesis and *Antiquitates*, but its purpose is different; in Genesis, Noah thanks God for the fact that the deluge is over and that he has survived.[10] However, because of the

[10] Gen 8:20.

request in the accompanying prayer, the purpose of the sacrifice in *Antiquitates* is now to appease God in return for a favour.

The idea that the covenant has come about because of Noah is confirmed in God's speech as well; several times Josephus writes that God made all promises because of Noah: he wants to fulfil Noah's prayer, because he loves Noah for his righteousness.[11]

2. *People at Mount Sinai (AJ 3.78)*

Josephus hardly changes this story, except that he simplifies it to the extent that Moses climbs the mountain only once instead of three times. However, an important change to the story is to give the people a more active role. While Moses is up on the mountain, the people celebrate for three days and, most importantly, they say a prayer on behalf of Moses: they ask God to give Moses the gift "by which they would live well"; in other words, they actually ask God to give Moses the law. In Exodus 19, without the prayer, being given the law and the ten commandments is a matter between God and Moses, and Moses presents it to the people. Josephus, however, made them ask for it themselves, which had the effect of stressing the importance of the law for the Jewish people and their willingness to obey it.

3. *Phinehas (AJ 5.159)*

The shift Josephus made by moving this story to the beginning of the time span covered by Judges, created a change in the meaning of the story, making the episode a result of a situation in which the Israelites conduct their lives without leaders and without observing the laws. However, the changed content of the prayer also makes a difference to the story. Having lost two fights with the Benjaminites, in Judges, the Israelites ask God whether they should fight them a third time.[12] But in *Antiquitates* Josephus makes them more resolute: they do not ask what to do, but they ask God to abandon his wrath and give them victory the third time they go to fight. They have already made up their minds to go and just ask God's help to win, instead of asking him to help make a decision. This gives the story a slight twist, showing a more self-confident people than in the biblical text.

[11] AJ 1.99, 101.
[12] Judg 20:27–28.

4. *Manoah and his wife (AJ 5.276, 280)*
These two prayers were discussed earlier under the heading of prayers used for dramatic or romantic effect. But since the prayers have so obviously been used to give the story a romantic twist and not only a 'colour', they should be mentioned in this category as well; they are not just used to illustrate the love between the two, but they change the underlying story as well: the angel appears as a response to Manoah's prayer instead of of his own accord, as in Judges;[13] and in order to have the opportunity to make the second prayer about Manoah's jealousy, the information concerning the son had to be given by the angel without being asked for, which Josephus therefore already made him do on his first visit.

5. *Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream (AJ 10.199)*
By changing both prayers in this story,[14] Josephus has shifted the emphasis. The first prayer contains a request for an explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In the Book of Daniel, this first prayer is delivered by Daniel's companions (at his orders), saying only that they sought mercy.[15] Josephus' Daniel, however, says the prayer himself, and it contains more than just a request for mercy: he asks for enlightenment and for a revelation concerning the dream.[16] The second prayer containing the thanksgiving is relatively long in the biblical text (four verses) and is delivered by Daniel himself,[17] whereas in *Antiquitates* Josephus keeps it very short, only saying that Daniel and his companions gave thanks to God. In this way, Josephus makes the request for an explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream more important than thanking God for it (without omitting the latter).

6. *Nehemiah pleading for his countrymen (AJ 11.162)*
The suffering of the Jews is what this story and its twist in *Antiquitates* are about. Both in the biblical text and *Antiquitates*, Nehemiah hears about their plight and, being upset about it, he prays to God. Just as he did with the rest of the story, Josephus abbreviated the prayer dras-

[13] Judg 13:3.
[14] See pp. 180–181.
[15] Dan 2:18.
[16] Moreover, he asks for the magicians and Chaldaeans to be saved, which further indicates that this prayer has been used for the portrayal of Daniel, see below.
[17] Dan 2:20–23.

tically, but he kept it nonetheless even, as one of only a few, writing it in direct speech; moreover he used it to comment on the supposed helplessness of the people. Whereas in the biblical text Nehemiah lays the responsibility for their suffering with the Jews themselves, confessing that he, his family and all the Israelites had sinned against God and his laws,[18] Josephus' Nehemiah refers to the people as "prey" and "booty". Obviously, Josephus does not wish to portray the Jewish people as authors of their own misfortune and omits Nehemiah's confession of their guilt.

E. *Portrayal of character*

The portrayal of character is an important function in more than half of the prayers investigated.

1. *Noah after the Flood (AJ 1.96–98)*
Besides the part this prayer plays in angling the story so that the covenant comes about as a result of Noah's actions, it also presents Noah in a different light to that in Genesis; whereas in Genesis Noah is only someone to whom God talks and who does exactly as he is told, in *Antiquitates* he acts on his own initiative: he has become a strong personality, who acts independently. Prior to the Flood, he tries to better the ways of the angels of God; in Genesis Noah does not even come into the picture when their sins are described. The fact that after the Flood the sacrifice is accompanied by a prayer is another element that shows Noah's character. He is not just thanking God, but he bends the situation to his will by asking God for some very specific favours: no more disaster, restoration for the righteous (among whom, of course, Noah himself) of the previous order of things, and a reversal of God's decision on the people's longevity. God promises to fulfil this prayer because Noah asks it, and because he loves him for his righteousness.

2. *Isaac's blessing (AJ 1.272–273) (portrayal of Jacob)*
The next two prayers are both used to portray the same person, though they are said by different people: Isaac's blessing and Jacob's vow at Bethel. Both prayers are important vehicles for Josephus' attempt to present Jacob, the patriarch of the Jewish people, in a positive light.

[18] Neh 1:5–11.

As we discussed earlier, in the introduction to the treatment of Isaac's blessing, Josephus tried to mitigate the negative picture of Jacob in Genesis, sometimes at the expense of his brother Esau. To achieve this, for instance, he postponed the incident of the lentil pottage and omitted Jacob's name, and he left out the struggle between the two brothers in Rebecca's womb. The prayers play a part in this as well. To begin with the blessings Isaac pronounces at his deathbed, Josephus' most obvious changes are, first, the reaction of Isaac who, when he discovers his mistake, is not nearly as upset in Antiquitates as he is in Genesis.

Secondly, Isaac asks that Jacob should be "frightening to enemies and pleasing to friends"; in other words, a person who is in control of the people around him. This differs from the biblical blessing,[19] according to which Isaac asks God to curse or bless Jacob's opponents; this makes God responsible for (the feelings of) the opponents rather than Jacob himself.

The third element is in the second blessing of Esau, in which Josephus omits the biblical detail that Esau will throw the yoke of his brother off his neck; although, according to Josephus' version of the second blessing, Esau's future prospects are good (he is to become famous and strong), he will always serve his brother Jacob.

3. *Jacob's vow (AJ 1.284)*

The second prayer portraying Jacob is the vow made by Jacob himself (AJ 1.284), though the evidence is not as clear as it is in the case of Isaac's blessing. Josephus hardly changed the content of the vow; the only thing he changed was the biblical promise: "If I return safely, the Lord will be my God".[20] Since Jacob's reservations in accepting God as his God look like an insult, Josephus changed the statement into a promise to sacrifice.

4. *Amram (AJ 2.211)*

Josephus added a long story with Amram as the main character, marking the beginning of the 'age of Moses'. Amram's prayer, prompted by pharaoh's decree to kill all newborn Jewish boys, illustrates his pivotal role when faced with the agitation of men who are afraid to lose their sons. Moreover, it shows how, at a time of great personal

[19] Gen 27:27–29.
[20] Gen 28:20–22.

distress, he chooses to pray for the community rather than for himself or his pregnant wife.

5. *Moses at the Red Sea (AJ 2.335–337)*

What strikes one most is the large number of prayers used in the portrayal of Moses: four prayers depict Moses as a strong and clever leader, in line with the important role Josephus ascribes to him. Moses, being the lawgiver, is the central figure in Josephus' thinking: a large part of *Contra Apionem* is devoted to Moses and his importance for Jewish and world history.[21]

The first one is Moses' prayer at the Red Sea. Although Josephus' Moses gives the impression of asking help from God, it is actually Moses himself who offers the solution to the problem of the approaching Egyptians; he says in his prayer: "the sea is yours and the mountain is yours, so that, if you order it so, it may be opened and the sea can be made into dry land". In the biblical text, however, Moses just tells the people that God will deliver them; they should stand firm and wait for the Lord to help, whereupon God resolves the situation by dividing the sea.[22] In *Antiquitates*, on the other hand, Moses strikes the sea on his own initiative: he does not wait for God to tell him what to do, he knows.

6. *Moses at Rephidim (AJ 3.34)*

The vivid portrayal of Moses can also be seen in his prayer at Rephidim and its context, which contains three more prayers that also show Moses' calm and understanding response to the people's grumbling.[23] In broad outline, the stories in *Antiquitates* and Exodus are similar; however, when we take a closer look there are some significant differences, most of which underline the strong leadership that Moses displays in Josephus' account.

The first prayer, at Marah, concerning the bitter, undrinkable water of the spring, has a parallel in Exodus, even though the content of the prayer is not given there. As in the previous example of Moses at the Red Sea, Moses encounters a problem but knows how to resolve it himself in *Antiquitates*, whereas he needs God's help in Exodus; in Exodus, God tells Moses to throw a stick in the water, whereas in

[21] CA 2.145–185.
[22] Exod 14:13–16.
[23] AJ 3.6, 23, 25, 26.

Antiquitates he only seems to ask approval from God, after which he throws the stick on his own initiative. The second prayer in *Antiquitates* is when the hungry people threaten to stone Moses; Moses speaks to them and calms them down; then, understanding their plight, he prays to God to grant them succour and to pardon them for what they were about to do. In Exodus, Moses asks Aaron to speak to the mob, and God sends food because he heard the people grumbling. The third prayer is one of thanksgiving for the birds that God sent as food; Moses delivers this prayer while the people are assuaging their hunger. The fourth prayer is the one at Rephidim; in Exodus the people threaten to stone Moses and Moses is very afraid of them: desperately he calls out: "What should I do now: they want to stone me".[24] In *Antiquitates*, however, Moses is not desperate at all: he does not even pray for his own rescue. He asks God to give the people something to drink, because otherwise they would not be grateful any more. In Exodus, Moses is afraid and desperate, but by means of his prayer Josephus turns him into a great, altruistic leader.

7. *Moses and Aaron (AJ 3.310)*

The prayer by Moses and Aaron fits in perfectly with the previous examples: the people are angry at Moses and Aaron, and the two brothers (acting together) respond by asking God to help the crowd. Changing the order of the story makes this even clearer: in Numbers the people are disappointed because of the message the Canaanite spies deliver; Moses and Aaron fall on their knees; Joshua and Caleb address the people, saying that they should trust God, whereupon the people become angry; then God comes to Moses saying that he will punish the people.[25] In *Antiquitates*, however, Joshua and Caleb's speech and the anger of the crowd precede Moses and Aaron's obeisance and prayer, which turns their prayer into a reaction to the people's anger. Despite the threatening mood of the people, their prayer is not for their own rescue, and Josephus stresses this by stating explicitly, "they beseeched God not for their own safety", but for the ignorant crowd.

Another result of changing the order of events is that God appears in response to the prayer by Moses and Aaron; he does not appear of his own accord as he does in Numbers. Moreover, Moses seems to know

[24] Exod 17:4.
[25] Num 13–14.

God's intentions just from the appearance of the dark cloud, whereas in Numbers God has a long conversation with Moses. Josephus ends the story by saying how much Moses was, and is, admired: a hero with superhuman power.[26]

8. *Moses outside Datham's tent (AJ 4.40–50)*

This prayer characterises Moses as a righteous man. He asks God to punish those who doubt his leadership, but, as in the corresponding speech in the biblical text, he acknowledges that he might be wrong in judging the men. However, in complete contrast to the speech in Numbers[27] is Moses' proposal to God: he asks that the punishment he suggested for the wrongdoers may be visited upon himself if he has misjudged the situation, whereas in Numbers he merely says that, if he is wrong, everything will stay the way it is now. Josephus' Moses is either very sure of himself, or a highly righteous man, prepared to undergo a horrible death if God so decides. In view of the rest of the prayer, the latter is the more likely: Moses asks God several times to be his witness for everything he has done in the past, saying that God saw him all the time. He even draws a parallel between himself and God; if Moses is suspected of having done wrong, then they must suspect God as well, since it is he who sent Moses to Egypt and guided them through the desert.

In this lengthy prayer, Moses emphasises his own righteousness by stressing that he had never been bribed with gifts, never chose rich people over poor, never damaged the common good and had never even thought of abandoning these customs. Moreover, he says how unfairly he has been treated by the people, since he gave up his good, quiet life to free them.

9. *Joshua (AJ 5.39–41)*

By turning the negative tone of this prayer in the Book of Joshua[28] into a more positive one in *Antiquitates*, Josephus manages to present Joshua, Moses' successor, as a strong personality, able to deal with problems.

In the biblical text Joshua is in mourning, having heard about the death of the men he sent to Naia; he is completely dismayed by the

[26] AJ 3.317, 318.
[27] Num 16:28–30.
[28] Josh 7:7–9.

news and he blames God. In *Antiquitates*, Josephus writes how the people start lamenting while Joshua keeps his head and starts to pray to God. Josephus thus changes the identity of the mourners: it is not Joshua but the people who mourn. In addition, he changes the subject of the prayer. In the Bible Joshua reproaches God, asking why he had even bothered to help them cross the Jordan if they were going to be defeated after all, and he threatens him as well, telling him that he risks not being honoured any more if he allows the Canaanites to extirpate the Jewish nation. Josephus' Joshua is much more reasonable, he stresses that so far, the things God promised have come true, but that the people are now very insecure because it looks as if things will turn out badly this time; therefore he asks God to take away their fear by giving them victory. This is a completely different approach from that in the Book of Joshua, and it presents Joshua as a well-balanced, person.

10. *Samson (AJ 5.302)*

Samson's prayer again shows Josephus trying to present his subject in a more favourable light. After he has defeated his attackers, Samson is very pleased with himself and does not thank God for what has been accomplished; he boasts about his strength and the terror he strikes into the enemy. In *Antiquitates*, however, a little later, he is thirsty and realises why: he did not acknowledge God's assistance. He now understands that human bravery is not everything. Realisation does not come to him in the Judges prayer, where Samson is very angry with God for his unfairness: having let him win in the first place, he will now allow him to die of thirst and fall into the hands of his enemies.[29] Instead of the somewhat aggressive tone of this prayer, Josephus' Samson realises how arrogant he was being; possibly Josephus was trying to show that Samson was not so foolish after all.

11. *David's thanksgiving hymn (AJ 7.95)*

This prayer has been written in such a way as to show David as a hymn singer; the stories in *Antiquitates* and in both biblical source texts are very similar, though Josephus has shortened David's prayer in comparison with the biblical one.[30] The only detail Josephus has added is that David sang hymns. As other passages in *Antiquitates* show, David

[29] Judg 15:18.
[30] 2 Sam 7:18–29; 2 Chr 17:16–27.

was known for singing hymns and even for his authorship of the Book of Psalms.[31]

12. *David's prayer for Solomon (AJ 7.380–381) (portrayal of Solomon)*
The next three prayers are used to portray the same person, even though the person who prays is different: David's prayer for Solomon and both prayers by Solomon at the Temple demonstrate Solomon's wisdom and virtuousness.

Firstly, there are several instances in which Josephus has David refer to Solomon in Hellenistic terms,[32] and this prayer is one of them. Josephus has replaced typically Jewish elements of the biblical prayer[33] with expressions originating in Hellenistic culture. The request David makes on behalf of his son Solomon, in particular, has been changed by Josephus so as to portray Solomon as the wise person Jews know him for. Instead of asking for Solomon to have a pious heart, dedicated to God and his commandments, Josephus' David wants for Solomon a sound and just mind; qualities appropriate for a man known for his wisdom. Moreover, David adds to this request that he also wants Solomon's mind to be empowered by the other elements of virtue; so, besides wisdom and justice, David asks for courage, temperance and piety as well. Strangely enough, although at other times Josephus mentions piety (which is the main virtue requested in the biblical text) as one of the qualities of Solomon,[34] apparently wisdom and justice were the most important for Josephus at this point.

13. *Solomon at the Temple (AJ 8.107–108, 111–117)*
Both of Solomon's prayers at the Temple are full of Stoic terminology and present Solomon as a philosopher, thinking about what to say that would be appropriate to the deity and to himself. In Josephus' day, philosophers were regarded as wise and since Solomon was known to have been a wise man, to Josephus it followed that he must have been a philosopher.

The Stoic elements in Josephus' thinking will be summed up below, under the heading of theology; but when we consider the Stoic ideas that Josephus has Solomon express in his prayer, and David's wishes for

[31] See p. 141.
[32] See pp. 150–151.
[33] 1 Chr 29:10–19.
[34] AJ 7.338, 356.

his son, it is obvious that Josephus regarded these prayers as a vehicle for his portrayal of Solomon as a wise man, a philosopher.

14. *Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream (AJ 10.199)*
Josephus made several changes to the prayer at this point in the story; the most eye-catching change is that, in *Antiquitates*, Daniel prays to God himself, whereas in the biblical text he orders his companions to pray for him.[35] But the most important change, which highlights Daniel's goodness, is his request in his prayer to save the magicians and Chaldaeans, who are about to be killed by the king because they could not answer the king's questions about his dream. In the biblical text, however, Daniel's companions seek God's mercy so that they will be rescued and not be killed along with the others. It shows Daniel's concern even for non-Jews.[36] Moreover, in line with Josephus' own guidelines for prayer in CA 2.196, Daniel does not pray for himself, but he prays for common safety.[37]

15. *Ezra about mixed marriages (AJ 11.143–144)*
Ezra prays to God because of the sins committed by his fellow-countrymen by marrying non-Jewish wives. Different in the Book of Ezra (and 3 Ezra) and *Antiquitates* is the subject of the prayer: in the biblical text Ezra confesses the men's guilt, and he includes himself.[38] Josephus' Ezra, on the other hand, does not confess guilt: he asks God to forgive the men their sins; moreover, he does not include himself with the wrongdoers. So Josephus portrays Ezra slightly different from the biblical Ezra: Josephus emphasises that Ezra was not involved in the wrong-doing and, although he strongly objects to marrying non-Jewish women in the prayer (they did "things deserving death"), he writes the prayer as a request for forgiveness, which tones down the offence.

16. *Onias (AJ 14.24)*
Josephus introduces Onias as a man known for his righteousness. He plays only a very small part in Josephus' story, since he is put to death immediately after the prayer he has been asked to say. The prayer, however, shows exactly why Josephus wishes to present Onias as an

[35] Dan 2:18.
[36] See also Feldman, *Josephus's*, 644–645.
[37] See Chapter 5, pp. 245–248.
[38] Ezra 9:6–15; 3 Ezra 8:71–87.

exemplar of righteousness.[39] In the battle between two Jewish factions, he refuses to take sides even though he knows it will cost him his life. Therefore he asks God not to fulfil either request.

17. *Izates (AJ 20.90)*
Izates has converted to Judaism and Josephus takes every opportunity to emphasise the fact; Josephus' Izates prays because he is about to be attacked by the Parthian king Vologeses. As a good Jew, he turns to God and decides to put his trust in him. In this prayer, Josephus puts a typically biblical expression into Izates' mouth: he says that he tasted the goodness of God (an expression derived from the Book of Psalms);[40] he then says that God is the only and first lord of all. The fact that such sentiments are being expressed by a convert makes his conversion the more distinct. And thirdly, he says his enemies should be punished because they have offended God's power. The enemies are not Jewish; by highlighting the fact in such a way, he distances himself from them even more.

III. The Functions Concerning Content

Prayers are religious utterances. It follows that they express religious convictions. Nearly all of the prayers are set within the context of a story, which must therefore always be borne in mind when evaluating the content. However, in some cases they appear to have been used to express theological ideas or to underline Jewish identity by referring to specifically Jewish concepts.

A. *Jewish identity*

1. *Moses at the burning bush (AJ 2.275)*
With this prayer Josephus draws attention to the question of God's name: Moses asks God to tell him, so that he can invoke him during the sacrifices. The prayer comes at the end of a long dialogue between God and Moses; in the Bible the dialogue form is continued when Moses asks what to call God;[41] Josephus, however, switches from dialogue to

[39] In AJ 14.22 Josephus introduces Onias as "a righteous man".
[40] Ps 33:9 (LXX).
[41] Exod 3:13.

prayer to put the question. This issue, which is central to Judaism, is thus differentiated from the other questions Moses asks, such as, 'Will the people believe and follow me?' and, 'How do I persuade Pharaoh to let them go?'

2. *People at Mount Sinai (AJ 3.78)*
The prayer said by the people at Mount Sinai with their request to give Moses (who has ascended Mount Sinai to consult God regarding the organisation of the people) a gift by which they could live well is an expression of Jewish identity. Of course they mean the law, which Moses brings down with him three days later. With this prayer Josephus shows that the Jewish people actively *wish* to have the law.

3. *Mordecai (AJ 11.229–230)*
Josephus uses Mordecai's prayer as an expression of the bond between God and the Jewish people, but in a different manner to that in which it is presented in the Septuagint.[42] In the Additions to the Book of Esther, Mordecai flatters God, saying that he is all-powerful and all-knowing; in *Antiquitates*, Mordecai refers to God's taking care of the people in the past. This is a reference to the providence doctrine, which is used in many prayers (and elsewhere).[43] Moreover, Josephus' Mordecai uses the request to apply some pressure, saying that the people have run into problems because they were faithful to their God and not because they have done anything wrong. God must help them, since he is the reason for the impending danger. The idea underlying this prayer is that Jews who act according to their law can depend on God to be there for them.[44]

4. *Onias (AJ 14.24)*
Again a very Jewish concern is expressed in this prayer by Onias: the importance of Jewish unity. Onias is asked by one group of Jews to pray against another; he refuses, however, and asks God not to listen to either group because both are God's people.

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[42] Add Esth 4:17[a–h].
[43] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.
[44] This idea is also to be seen in the prayer by Amram, who asks God to take pity on the people who did not transgress religious worship of God.

5. *Izates (AJ 20.90)*
And finally, Izates; his prayer, with its biblical phraseology, is a particular expression of Jewish identity. But it is precisely because Josephus intends to portray Izates as a good Jew that we may consider the ideas in his prayer to be those that Josephus himself considered important. The monolatric terms used in the prayer of the Israelites at Mount Carmel are evident in this prayer as well;[45] Izates says that he considers God to be the first and only lord of all. He goes on to ask God to be his ally, σύμμαχος, a word that Josephus uses frequently (e.g. in Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, where it was used in combination with βοηθός, helper, as an invocation).[46]

B. *Theology*

1. *Moses at the Red Sea (AJ 2.335–337)*
Certain words stand out in the prayer by Moses at the Red Sea since they express a particular theological concept: he asks God to be his ally and helper, and says that the Hebrews are counting on God's providence to save them. As we discussed earlier, all of these terms convey the same idea: the special bond between God and Israel.[47]

2. *Samson (AJ 5.302)*
Samson's prayer contains a theological idea, namely the idea that everything is in the hands of God: τῷ θεῷ πάντα. The debate about free will and predestination is discussed three times by Josephus: once in *De bello Judaico* and twice in *Antiquitates*.[48] Samson uses this expression when he realises that he was wrong in thinking that he could handle everything himself and that he was invincible; he proclaims that people should depend on God.

3. *Solomon at the Temple (AJ 8.107–108, 111–117)*
The clearest expression of Josephus' theological and philosophical ideas is to be found in the prayers he attributes to King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. The two prayers show strong Stoic influences: God and the place where he dwells are described in Stoic

[45] See the next category.
[46] For a discussion of both words see the treatment of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 93–94.
[47] See pp. 93–97.
[48] See p. 134.

terms. To avoid repetition, a brief summary will suffice here. In the first prayer Solomon describes God's dwelling place in terms of the four elements common in Greek philosophy: heaven (= fire), air, earth and sea (= water); God's presence is described in a way that resembles the Stoic doctrine of Pantheism, but Josephus seems to go further, apparently maintaining a panentheistic view of God and the world. The second prayer says that God is ἀπροσδεής, without need of anything, a term referring to the Stoic ideal to be free of everything and thus to need nothing. Solomon describes the voice (with which God should be praised) in Stoic terms as coming from the air, air being a part of *pneuma*, spirit, the principle that, again according to Stoic philosophy, moves and shapes the earth; Solomon also asks God to send a part of this *pneuma* to the Temple to live there. Finally, Solomon stresses that God could not *really* live in the Temple, it only *seems* as though he does; people, who need proof of God's presence, need to feel that God is really there; however, according to Josephus' Solomon this is only pretence or belief (δόξα).

4. *Israelites at Mount Carmel (AJ 8.343)*

The prayer of the Israelites at Mount Carmel is another obvious case as well. In their prayer they acknowledge Elijah's God as theirs, as they do in the biblical parallel. However, Josephus takes the opportunity to make them describe God with words expressing more than the biblical "The Lord is God". They call God the greatest and only true God: an expression that Josephus uses several times. They call their God 'true', ἀληθής, as opposed to the gods of the Baal priests who are only "created by cheap and silly opinion (δόξα)", the same word that Solomon used in his second prayer at the Temple dedication to say that God only seemed to live in the Temple. Not only does this prayer obviously mark the turning point when the Israelites choose to return to their own God, Josephus uses it to describe God with the attributes he believes proper.

CHAPTER FIVE

A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE?

Chapter 2 focused on what Josephus says about prayer. In *Contra Apionem* Josephus instructs people as to what they should pray for and as to how they should comport themselves during prayer (and sacrifice). Chapter 3 was concerned with the material relating to prayer to be gleaned throughout the entire body of Josephus' work. Since Josephus explicitly tells people in *Contra Apionem* what they should and should not pray for, we have used it as a starting point to gain insight into his views on prayer. Now it is time to compare the content of this passage with the prayers Josephus ascribes to the individuals in his narratives. Do the individuals Josephus portrays in the narratives comply in their prayers with the rules he prescribes in *Contra Apionem*? If so, or not, does this say anything about his view of particular individuals or about his ideas regarding prayer in general?

The passage under concern in this chapter is shorter than the one we considered in Chapter 2, where the *Contra Apionem* passage was treated in its context. In the present chapter only remarks that are concerned with prayer will be considered, and not the remarks concerning sacrifice. The items will be discussed in the same order as they appear in the original text. As in the chapter on the literary function of the prayers, I will mainly look at the prayers that were discussed extensively in Chapter 3, only occasionally supplementing this by looking at the rest of the prayers.

But first a number of things need to be mentioned at this point. The first is the obvious differences that exist between *Contra Apionem* on the one hand and *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates Judaicae* on the other. To begin with, the writings have different target audiences. Particularly in the case of *Contra Apionem* the factor of intended audience had much influence on the content of the work, since it was Josephus' purpose to correct the misunderstandings harboured by Gentiles regarding Jews. In the case of the two historical works, however, the factor of intended audience is of less significance. No doubt when he wrote these works Josephus would have had a particular audience in mind, and certainly there are passages in which it is very apparent who comprised this

audience. But in their general storylines the historical works were more influenced by their sources[1] than by the particular audience envisaged by the writer.

Even more important is the difference in genre, because the genre determines the main focus. In a work of apology such as *Contra Apionem*[2] setting out rules and regulations is the main purpose. In this case the writer is very deliberate as to how he explains the law and the precise regulations he wants to set down. By contrast, in a narrative account the storyline and the characters take first place; concern about whether the rules are being followed or not and about the content of the law is only a secondary matter at most. We have seen that in *Contra Apionem* Josephus describes prayer practice with great attention to detail. In *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates*, however, his primary concern is the historical narrative: the prayers are subordinate to this goal and their contents have function only in the telling of the story.

Finally, we need to consider that there may be a difference between the kind of prayer Josephus is talking about in *Contra Apionem* and the prayers we encounter in the narrative histories. Unlike in the latter, it is probably statutory prayer that Josephus was discussing in his treatment of the law: prayers offered in the Temple during the sacred rites.[3] On the other hand, there is no reason to think that Josephus would have espoused different notions if he had written similar guidelines for individual or literary prayers such as we find his narrative histories, since in writing these prayers he drew on everyday reality.[4] Despite the differences between the works we are considering, we may assume that the rules of prayer were in the back of Josephus' mind at all times. In *Contra Apionem* Josephus was explaining Jewish law and religious beliefs, subjects with which he must have been very familiar given his education in Jerusalem as member of a priestly family.[5] What Josephus wrote in *Contra Apionem* was what he believed to be the universally applicable rules regarding prayer. Consequently a comparison between the rules he laid out theoretically in *Contra Apionem* and the practice he depicted in *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates* seems very worthwhile undertaking.

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[1] At this point counting as sources both lived experience and other writings.

[2] In this case CA 2.145–296, the third part of the work (see the introduction to the discussion of this passage, pp. 25–26).

[3] For a discussion of the difference between statutory prayer and individual prayer, see Talmon, *World*, 200–202.

[4] Heiler, *Gebet*, 33–34.

[5] V 7–9.

I. Sacrifice and Prayer

The *Contra Apionem* passage we looked at implied that there was prayer at the sacrifice. As we noted, however, the combination of these two religious acts is not to be found in any biblical prescription or description. Our conclusion in Chapter 2 was that prayer and sacrifice as a combined ritual was only instituted later, after the final redaction of the Torah. By the early second century BCE it seems to have become a fixed combination (Jesus Sirach 50:19 probably being the earliest text indicating simultaneous conduct of prayer and sacrifice). By the time of Josephus and the New Testament, certainly, it had become standard practice. Moreover, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, prayer was even to become a substitute for sacrifice as it had already been before 70 among the Qumranites.[6]

The prayers in Josephus' work we discuss in this chapter were made in combination with sacrifice. As we will see, every instance fits with the development sketched above and in Chapter 2; the combined act is frequently described by Josephus despite its absence from all the corresponding biblical passages.

The first prayer is Noah's prayer after the Flood. As in Genesis Noah sacrifices with burnt offerings intended to please God with their smell. However, Josephus' account departs from the biblical text in depicting Noah accompanying this sacrifice with a prayer. As discussed earlier, the effect of this prayer is that Noah expresses a request, whereas in Genesis the intention of the sacrifice without prayer seems to have been only to give thanks to God.

The prayer Moses says at the burning bush needs to be mentioned here, not because it is a prayer that accompanies a sacrifice (which it is not), but because it talks of invoking God while sacrificing. This is the reason Moses presents for asking God's name. The reason given in Exodus is different: Moses wants to be able to tell the Hebrews in Egypt who it is that has sent him. The prayer by Solomon at the dedication of the new Temple is a similar case: he says they built the Temple so that people can send up prayers from it when sacrificing.

Elisha's prayer transforming the water from a spring near Jericho accompanies libations. In 2 Kings there are neither libations nor prayers.

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[6] For references see pp. 33–36.

Elisha only pours salt into the spring saying, "Thus says the Lord: I have healed the water".

Some further prayers are described as a combined act of prayer and sacrifice. This is the case with the prayer by Samuel at Mizpah: he sacrifices a sucking lamb while he prays to God asking him to protect the people. The biblical version says only that Samuel sacrificed and "called to the Lord for Israel"; no actual prayer is mentioned. The case is similar with some of the prayers that were not discussed extensively in Chapter 3. After he has killed his brother, Cain offers a sacrifice to God, asking God not to visit his wrath on him too severely. In the corresponding biblical passage there is no sacrifice.[7] King Jehoshaphat is grateful to God for being willing to deliver him from his enemies the Syrians even though God was displeased with him for making an alliance with the impious and wicked king Ahab. He therefore begins to give thanks and to offer sacrifices. Neither the prayer nor the sacrifice is mentioned in the corresponding biblical passage.[8] When the Assyrian general demands that King Hezekiah surrender Jerusalem, the latter asks the prophet Isaiah to pray and offer sacrifices for the safety of the people.[9] Another example of prayer-with-sacrifice is the prayer of the multitude assembled by order of King Josiah, who asks them to take an oath and swear that they will truly worship God. The multitude then "sacrificed and (…) supplicated God to be gracious and merciful to them".[10] Again, there is no biblical parallel to this prayer: both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles say only that the people entered the covenant.[11] And when the Jewish high priest Jaddus fears the Macedonians because their king is angry with him on account of his disobedience, he orders the people to join him in making supplication and offering sacrifices.[12] There are also two occurrences involving pagans performing prayer and sacrifice jointly. At Vespasian's triumphal reception in Rome the crowds make libations and pray for a long reign for Vespasian and his descendants.[13] Finally, after the execution of Simon ben Giora, Vespasian and Titus offer sacrifices along with the customary prayers.[14]

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[7] Cain, AJ 1.58; Gen 4:13–14.
[8] Jehoshaphat thanking God, AJ 9.2; 2 Chr. 19:3.
[9] AJ 10.12.
[10] The people repenting, AJ 10.64.
[11] 2 Kgs 23:3 and 2 Chr 34:32.
[12] Jaddus, AJ 11.326.
[13] The crowds in Rome, BJ 7.73.
[14] Vespasian and Titus after the execution of Simon ben Giora, BJ 7.155.

All of these cases confirm what was said in Chapter 2: that prayer-with-sacrifice became customary only after biblical times but had become standard practice in Josephus' time. To repeat, in Josephus' work the combination occurs several times, while it is never found in the corresponding biblical text.

II. The Command to Pray for the Community First

The first rule Josephus gives in the *Contra Apionem* passage examined is that one must pray first for the safety of the community as a whole, and only after that for oneself. The reason given for this rule is that "we are born for the community". Let us now see whether the main characters in Josephus' histories adhere to this rule.

To begin with, there are a few prayers that explicitly mention the idea of 'community'. The second prayer by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple brings up the notion of the human community in the widest possible sense: "I ask that this help of yours be not only for the Hebrews who will err, but also for people coming from the ends of the earth or from wherever, who turn to you".[15] Solomon not only includes the Jews in the community, but everyone who turns to God, from whichever part of the world. Onias' prayer is less inclusive. Although he does not say it explicitly, his prayer implies a sense of community when he says in his prayer that: "they who are standing with me now are your people, and those who are besieged are your priests".[16] The meaning here is that all the people present adhere to the same God and therefore belong to the same community. This is why he asks God not to fulfil the wishes any of them have that involve harm to any of the others. Finally, the people supporting Esther pray for the Jewish community because they fear for their fate. They pray to God for their own safety and for God "to rescue the Israelites in the whole country".[17] Although the order here is reversed (they pray for themselves first), the similarity to Josephus' concerns in *Contra Apionem* is apparent.

This similarity turns up in other prayers. In our discussion of Moses and Aaron's prayer we mentioned how Josephus describes their rigorous adherence to the rule, saying that while they were under attack

[15] AJ 8.116.
[16] AJ 14.24.
[17] AJ 11.231.

from the crowd they prayed to God "not for their own safety", but for that of the people, asking God to liberate them from their fear and helplessness.[18] The same applies to the prayers Moses said at Elis and at Rephidim (although in neither of these cases is the rule adhered to as rigorously as in the prayer of Moses and Aaron). In both these prayers even though Moses is assaulted by the hungry or thirsty crowd, he does not pray to God to be rescued from them (as he does in the biblical account of the Rephidim incident)[19] but rather beseeches God to give the people food or drink.

Moses' father Amram was equally rigorous in adhering to the rule. When his family is in direct danger because his wife is pregnant at the time when the Pharaoh has ordered all Hebrew boys to be killed, Amram prays not for himself, and not even for his family, but for the people, and asks God to deliver them from the prospect of destruction.[20]

Daniel's prayer for elucidation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream also shows a concern for others ahead of himself. Although the king has threatened to kill all wise men (including Daniel and his relatives) if they fail to decipher his dream, when Daniel prays he asks God to save the Chaldaeans and Magicians. In Josephus' account the prayer hardly mentions the threat to Daniel's own life. The others are obviously Daniel's main concern: "Save the Magicians and the Chaldaeans together with whom we are to be killed".[21] This stands in stark contrast to the biblical text, which has the order reversed: there Daniel sought the mercy of God "so that [he] and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon".[22] Although of less value to our argument, for the reason that it is in agreement with its corresponding biblical text (the apocryphal prayer by Mordecai), for the sake of completeness we must mention the case of Mordecai, who also acts in accord with the rule: in the face of a mass execution of Jews he prays for the whole people.[23]

Finally, Onias' prayer also conforms to the rule. Although he is threatened with harm by Hyrcanus' people if he will not place a curse on Aristobulus and the people inside the city, Onias chooses neither to

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[18] Moses and Aaron, AJ 3.310.
[19] Exod 17:4: "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!"
[20] Amram, AJ 2.211.
[21] Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, AJ 10.199.
[22] Dan 2:18.
[23] AJ 11.229.

rescue himself by obeying them nor to pray for his own safety. Instead he prays for the situation to be resolved without the people falling apart. His concern too is for the community before himself.[24]

Less explicit, but also demonstrating prayer for the common good rather than for one's own benefit, are the prayers made by Noah after the Flood, Moses at the Red Sea, Joshua, Phinehas, Samuel at Mizpah, Solomon at the temple, Ezra about mixed marriages, and Nehemiah.

There are a number of cases, however, in which individuals do not adhere to the rule and neglect to pray for the safety of all. One of these is Esther. While the whole Jewish populace is in danger of being executed, she prays for herself first.[25] In this story the tasks have been divided: Mordecai and the people have the task of praying to God, while Esther's assignment is to go and see the king. As we saw, Mordecai and the people stick to the rule of praying first for the common safety of all. But Esther may seem to be thinking mainly of herself when she asks God to have pity on her and to make her look beautiful when she approaches the king. Esther's action can be seen be seen in two different ways, however: either she does indeed pray with her own safety uppermost in mind, or alternatively her primary reason for wanting to avert the king's anger is that she wants him to listen to her plea for her people. In view of the manner in which she ends her prayer, the latter interpretation appears to be the correct one; she asks God to let the king feel hatred towards the enemies of the Jews and, in so doing, in effect she puts the safety of the community first after all.

The story of Izates is another interesting case. Waiting for the Parthians to go on the offensive, Izates decides to place his trust in God. The Parthians aim to kill Izates and to replace him with a new king, but it seems clear that this will require war with the whole of Adiabene and not only an attack on Izates' own life. It would therefore be appropriate for Izates to pray to God for the safety of his people. Instead he asks God not to disappoint him and to be his ally, adding: "not only because of me, but because they have offended your power". One might say that he seems to pray on behalf of God.[26] However that may be, since Izates definitely does not pray for his people, his prayer is clearly not faithful to Josephus' rule.

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[24] Onias, AJ 14.24.
[25] Esther, AJ 11.231–233.
[26] Izates, AJ 20.90.

Finally, the most glaring example of all is, ironically, Josephus' own prayer.[27] We would expect that in his own prayer above all Josephus would be strict in demonstrating what he thought was the appropriate way to pray, but in fact the opposite is the case.[28] When the soldiers who have come to fetch him threaten to set the cave on fire, Josephus does not pray to God for the safety of all the Jews who are with him, as would be in accord with his rule, but on the contrary prays only on his own behalf. This is indeed strange; perhaps the best way to account for it is as follows. Josephus' main goal when he wrote this passage was not to reproduce his prayer precisely, but to convince his audience that he was not a traitor, that he was following the command of God. So, to Josephus, the inclusion of the prayer was above all an opportunity to justify himself.

III. The Prohibition to Ask for Good Things

The final section of the passage in *Contra Apionem* is complex. Josephus says that people should not pray for good things, for the reason that God has already given these things of his own accord. We found the same theme in some other writers, including Clement of Alexandria and Maximus of Tyre. Philo, by contrast, and several pagan authors, did not hesitate to link prayer with requests for good things.[29] Josephus says that God has put the good things at the disposal of all and that people should pray only for the capacity to accept and keep them.

1. *Following the rule?*

There are not many prayers in Josephus' work relating to this prescription. In fact, there are only seven prayers in which the word ἀγαθά actually occurs. In some cases the rule is followed, in others not.

The first prayer of relevance is Noah's prayer after the Flood.[30] In this prayer Noah asks that the people "should lack none of the good

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[27] Josephus, BJ 3.354.

[28] I do not wish to slide over the fact that Josephus wrote this prayer some 25 years before he wrote down the rules he gives in *Contra Apionem*. But, as was argued in the introduction to this section, it is reasonable to assume that these rules were in the back of Josephus' mind all along, and were not thought up when he was writing *Contra Apionem*.

[29] See p. 41.

[30] Noah after the Flood, AJ 1.96–98.

things they enjoyed before the deluge". He does not ask God to give the people good things, but he asks that the good things the people had before the Flood will remain at their disposal. This prayer seems to be in keeping with the rule.

Next there is the prayer of Naomi, who tells her daughters-in-law Ruth and Orpah not to follow her back to her home country but to find new husbands in their own country. When they refuse to leave her, she prays "that they may find happier wedlock (…) and obtain the other good things (τῶν ἄλ λων ἀγαθῶν κτῆσιν)".[31] Naomi does not ask for good things for herself, but she does pray for her daughters-in-law to be able to obtain them. Although this is not an entirely clear-cut case, on balance one might say that the prayer conforms to Josephus' prescriptions since Naomi does not ask for good things.

Solomon also mentions good things at the end of his long prayer at the dedication of the Temple. He seems very faithful to the rule when he says that everyone wants the "advantage of the good things" (τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὄνησιν).[32] He does not ask God to give these good things to the people, but he seems to assume that the good things are already there, and people only have to take advantage of them, just as Josephus says they should in *Contra Apionem*.

Other prayers, however, conform less well to the rule. One instance is Isaac's blessing.[33] Although in the first line of the prayer he refers to the good things God has bestowed upon his father, in section 273 he asks God to protect his son and keep him untouched by evil, "by giving him a happy life and possession of good things (κτῆσιν ἀγαθῶν) as much as is in your power to give". The difference with Naomi, who also prays for the possession (κτῆσις) of good things, is the addition in Isaac's prayer of the phrase "as much as is in your power to give", which indicates clearly the wish that God should give good things not yet given.

There are two more prayers that are obvious instances of praying for good things. In his prayer for Solomon, David asks for good things for the whole people, and for his son a sound and just mind.[34] And at the request of Dorotheus, the priest Elissaeus prays at a banquet, asking for "good things" (τὰ ἀγαθά) for the king and his subjects.[35]

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[31] Naomi, AJ 5.321.
[32] AJ 8.117.
[33] Isaac's blessing, AJ 1.272–273.
[34] David's prayer for Solomon, AJ 7.380–381.
[35] Elissaeus, AJ 12.98.

2. *The nature of the 'good things'*

The *Contra Apionem* passage also tells us about the nature of those 'good things'. Unlike the works of Maximus of Tyre and Juvenal, in which 'good things' seems to refer to rather abstract qualities like inner virtues or attributes, Josephus appears to have had in mind more concrete things, like wealth, a healthy life, and happiness. With this in mind, let us see what these good things consist of in the prayers.

Apart from the six prayers discussed above, there is one other prayer that mentions 'good things', but in this case they are not things to be, or not be, asked for, but just things that are mentioned. In his prayer outside Datham's tent, Moses says: "While I had secured for myself a life free from business (…) I devoted myself to hard work (…) while abandoning the enjoyment of those good things".[36] Moses says he abandoned the enjoyment of good things, which he appears to see as opposed to hard work, doing so even though he had the opportunity to live a tranquil life. The good things he says he abandoned are thus this quiet life, together with the things his father-in-law left him—a job as keeper of the flocks, a wife, and therewith a home.[37] Association of 'good things' with marriage in this manner was also a feature of Naomi's prayer: she wished for her daughters-in-law happier wedlock and *other* good things.

Isaac's blessing and Noah's prayer after the Flood exhibit a somewhat more general conception. Both connect 'good things' with 'a happy life'. Noah mentions a good old age and the length of the lives of the people. Isaac is less specific: he refers to good things that can be possessed next to a happy life. This could indicate children and wealth.

There is nothing to indicate what Solomon has in mind when he speaks of the 'good things' people want. However, at the beginning of the prayer he says that people should give thanks to God for the benefits they have received.[38] He does not use ἀγαθά here, but it is obvious that he is referring to things given by God. Later in the prayer Solomon says that he gives thanks to God for the glorious career given to his father and for the keeping of promises made to himself.[39] Conceivably, these things could come under Josephus' conception of what 'the good things' are.

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[36] Moses outside Datham's tent, AJ 4.40–50.
[37] See AJ 2.263.
[38] ὑπὲρ ὧν εὖ πεπόνθασιν, AJ 8.111.
[39] AJ 8.112–113.

David's prayer for Solomon seems to be more in line with the ideas of Maximus and Juvenal. For the people he asks good things and for Solomon a sound and just mind. In this way he seems to create a parallel between good things and virtue.

Elissaeus' prayer gives no indication of what he means by 'good things'. His prayer could, however, show that asking for good things was no more than a formulaic way of praying, since Elissaeus was asked to pray instead of the officers who normally did so.[40]

These seven prayers all convey a similar idea of what Josephus meant by 'good things' in *Contra Apionem*. The basic meaning is a happy, healthy life. Now that we have become clear about this, the next step is to see what, when they do not mention τὰ ἀγαθά, the individuals in Josephus' writings pray for.

There are a number of things people typically pray for: they ask for pity, for God to be gracious or to let go his wrath, for God to be their ally, for safety, for victory in war, or for information they suppose will help them attain their goals. Of course there are also many prayers in which nothing is asked for but whose purpose is rather to express gratitude.[41] In this discussion, which concerns praying, or not praying, for good things, four more prayers can be mentioned on the grounds that they concern the quality of life of the person who prays or of another person, and thus comes close to being requests for 'good things'.

When Noah hears his son Ham laughing at him because he was sleeping naked, he curses the descendants of Ham. But for his other children he prays for happiness: εὐδαιμονία.[42] As we saw, a 'happy life' was probably one aspect of 'good things', so we could say that in a sense Noah does ask for good things here. Having children was another aspect of 'good things' and indeed some of the prayers ask God to grant children. Leah's prayer (AJ 1.303) may be a case in point. She is jealous of Jacob's love for her sister, and hoping to win his esteem by bearing children she continually supplicates God. The words of the prayer itself are not given but it is evident that it concerns children. Since Josephus did not provide the words, however, we cannot be certain whether he intended to show Leah as asking for children to be given to

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[40] AJ 12.97; see Chapter 2, p. 51.

[41] See the list of prayer subjects at the end of this book.

[42] Noah's prayer and curse for his sons, AJ 1.142. About the concept of εὐδαιμονία, see the treatment of Isaac's blessing, pp. 73–74.

her, or only for the capacity to keep them. Manoah prays for children as well, every day asking for a legitimate succession.[43] Hezekiah's prayer to continue living can be thought of as a prayer for 'good things' in an indirect way. He wants stay alive longer so he can have children.[44] Hezekiah does not ask directly for children, nor for a good life, but his prayer is clearly an indirect request for the same things.

To sum up, of these four prayers two ask God directly for something in the line of 'good things', while the other two (Leah's and Hezekiah's) are not explicit about what they are asking for. Together with our finding above, that three out of six prayers explicitly mention good things and actually ask for them, the scales seems to be balanced. It is clear that Josephus has some difficulty in adhering to the complex rule concerning 'good things' he set out in *Contra Apionem*.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that most of the time Josephus seems to depict the people in his account praying in the proper way. Only on a few occasions does someone either pray for himself or herself rather than for the community, or ask explicitly for good things. These latter prayers in particular can be explained by the fact that it was common to pray for τὰ ἀγαθά in antiquity. But the main trend is that the rules are adhered to by the people in Josephus' account. The strict standard we see in *Contra Apionem* seems to have had its repercussions on the stories as well, both in *De bello Judaico* and *Antiquitates*. The most interesting deviance from this is Josephus' own prayer. In this case the needs of life apparently outweighed his attachment to his principles.

[43] Manoah, AJ 5.276.
[44] Hezekiah asking for a longer life, AJ 10.26.

CHAPTER SIX

JOSEPHUS' IDEA OF GOD

Taken together the many prayers treated in Chapter 3 present us with a diverse terminology relating to God: invocations, epithets, attributes and philosophical ideas. It is now time to systematise these various concepts in order to focus on the theology that emerges from the prayers. How does Josephus conceive of the relationships between God and man, and between God and world, and what do the prayers tell us about his conception of the power and role of God in the life of human beings and the universe?

It is beyond the scope of the present study to set out a comprehensive theological framework for Josephus' view of God. In any case, in his *Wie sprach Josephus von Gott* Adolf Schlatter has already treated the subject extensively. For the purpose of this study it suffices to focus on Josephus' conception of God as it emerges from the prayers, and to compare this with his general idea of God.

The attributes and designations used by Josephus in the prayers can be divided into three main categories. One category comprises all the epithets relating to God as the origin of the universe. This is an umbrella category, since the concepts that define the other two categories can be considered as aspects of God as origin of the universe. The second category is God as ruler, and the third is God as helper and protector.

I. God as Origin

If a hierarchy were to be made of all the designations and names Josephus has for God, the overarching designation would be 'origin', γένεσις: God is the origin of the universe.[1] Josephus uses this term only once and there seem to be no other examples of this way of using the word for a deity in either Jewish or Greek literature. However, the con-

[1] David's prayer for Solomon, AJ 7.380–381.

cept of God as source of everything is common in Greek philosophy. For the Stoics God was identical to cosmic Nature, Nature being the power or principle that shapes and creates all things and which unifies the world.[2] The Greek word the Stoics used was φύσις, which can also mean 'origin'. Although they do not use the word 'genesis', the conception of God as source or origin is essentially the same.[3] Josephus himself has yet another way of expressing this idea: in his description of God in CA 2.190–192 he says that God is "the beginning (ἀρχή), the middle and the end of all things" (CA 2.190).[4] For Josephus this is an important aspect of God, as can be inferred from the fact that it is one of the first things he mentions in this passage.

The adjective πρῶτος, 'first', which Josephus uses once in his prayers[5] is logically related to this designation. So is ἀπροσδεής, 'not in need of anything', which is another Stoic attribute of God. The latter is similar to αὐτάρκης, 'sufficient in himself', or 'self-supporting', as Josephus calls God in the above mentioned passage in *Contra Apionem*. As origin of everything, God cannot be but first; and because he is the origin of all things he cannot be in need of anything else. Consequently he is self-sufficient.

1. *Creator*

A logical corollary of God as origin, but no less important, is God as creator, δημιουργός, as both Isaac and David call him in their prayers (AJ 1.272; 7.380). As creator, God is responsible for the coming into existence of the world and everything in it. Josephus stated this in his account of the story of creation: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (AJ 1.27) and "God fashioned man by taking dust from the earth" (AJ 1.34). At AJ 1.155 Abraham calls God "the creator (δημιουργός) of the universe". At CA 2.192 Josephus also speaks of the seven "elements" of the universe God created.[6] Here he expresses himself in a more philosophical way when he says: "These God created not with hands, not with toil, not with assistants (…); he willed it so".[7]

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[2] Long, *Hellenistic*, 108, 148.

[3] See the discussion of David's prayer for Solomon, pp. 147–148.

[4] See also Van Unnik, *Godspredikaat*.

[5] Izates, AJ 20.90.

[6] CA 2.192: "the light, the heaven, the earth, the sun, the waters, the reproductive creatures, the sprouting crops".

[7] The notion that God created the world by willing it, is also present in Plato's *Timaeus*

The word δημιουργός also has its origin in Greek philosophy. Plato was one of the first to use it for God in his *Timaeus*, a work that had an enormous impact on later Greek thought.[8] Another word that Josephus uses to designate God as creator is κτίσας; however, this does not occur in the prayers.[9]

2. *Father*

Another aspect of God in this category is God as 'father', πατήρ. David invokes God in his prayer for Solomon with this word in combination with the word γένεσις, origin.[10] In the discussion of this prayer we suggested that Josephus points to the procreative aspect of father, rather than the protective one, on the basis of the tandem construction with 'genesis'.[11] This is why the word fits perfectly into this first category, God as origin of the universe and of mankind.

Josephus uses the idea of God as father in several places. In AJ 2.152, for example, he renders a speech by Judah, who talks of his own father and says that God is the father of all. And in 4.262 he discusses the rules concerning rebellious children and says that God is "distressed at acts of effrontery to a father, since he is himself father of the whole human race".

3. *Theos*

The Greek word most commonly used to designate God is of course θεός. Although Josephus uses this word most frequently, in his prayers he oddly enough uses it in the vocative only once.[12] The more abstract word θεῖον, 'deity' or 'the divine', also occurs in only one prayer, Solomon's second prayer at the Temple dedication.[13] Moreover, Josephus uses it

(29e–30a): "Let us now state the cause wherefore he that constructed it, constructed becoming and the all. (…) Being devoid of envy, he desired that all should be, so far as possible, like unto himself (…) For God desired that, so far as possible, all things should be good and nothing evil". Although Josephus' word choice is different (using αὐτοῦ θελήσαντος instead of a form of βούλομαι as Plato does in both cases), it is possible that his statement was inspired by Plato's work, as is the case with his use of the word δημιουργός.

[8] For a more detailed discussion of the word δημιουργός in Plato's *Timaeus*, and of the book's influence, see the discussion of Isaac's blessing, pp. 68–69.

[9] On κτίσας see the discussion of Isaac's blessing, p.68, n. 50.

[10] AJ 7.380.

[11] See the discussion of David's prayer for Solomon, p. 146.

[12] Onias, AJ 14.24.

[13] AJ 8.111.

in his introductory sentence to the first prayer at the same locus, when he says that Solomon used words "suitable to the divine nature".[14] The word is more philosophical than θεός and therefore it fits very well with Solomon's prayer.[15] Given the fact that Josephus hardly ever uses either of the words to invoke God in prayers, we may surmise that he preferred to be more specific in his invocations.

In the prayers one finds several adjectives that can be classified as belonging to θεός, such as μέγιστος ('greatest'), ἀληθής ('true') and μόνος ('only'), all of them words that the Israelites at Mount Carmel used when calling upon God.[16] Josephus uses μόνος a second time in Izates' prayer when Izates calls God "the only and first (πρῶτος)". The Israelites acclaim God as the only god they want to worship and contrast him to the gods of the Baal priests, claiming that these are only names invented by "cheap and silly opinion", δόξα One might expect the word ὕψιστος, 'most high', to occur at this point too. However, Josephus does not use this word to invoke God. In fact, this word occurs only once in Josephus' work and then not in his own words, but in a decree by Augustus, who says that the Jews in Asia may live according to their own customs and law, as they did in the times of "Hyrcanus, high priest of the most high God".[17] Josephus evidently prefers to use μέγιστος rather than ὕψιστος.[18]

4. *Pneuma*

In Solomon's second prayer at the temple dedication Josephus refers to God and his πνεῦμα, *pneuma* or 'spirit'. Solomon wants God to send a part of his spirit to the temple. *Pneuma* represents a way of being, a manifestation of God; it is parallel to the Hebrew word רוּחַ, but also to the Stoic notion of the *pneuma* that permeates the universe. In Josephus' work, the "spirit of God" occurs only in *Antiquitates*. Besides Solomon's prayer, there are eight further instances. For the most part Josephus uses πνεῦμα to denote that which fills prophets and makes them into God's messengers. At AJ 4.118–119 Josephus relates the story of Balaam and tells how he was overcome by the divine spirit and

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[14] AJ 8.107.
[15] See the discussion of Solomon at the Temple, p. 155.
[16] Israelites at Mount Carmel, AJ 8.343.
[17] AJ 16.163.
[18] In earlier Jewish literature and the New Testament the term was common; for examples see Schlatter, *Wie*, 19 and Marcus, 'Divine', 115.

was powerless but to deliver the message God wanted him to deliver. And AJ 6.166 tells the story of how David began to prophesy to Saul after the divine spirit had entered him.[19] In AJ 4.108 Balaam is met by an angel of God and his ass is said to be conscious of the spirit of God (probably meaning the angel). This seems to come closest to the conception in Solomon's prayer: the spirit of God as a part of God that can be present at a particular place.

Solomon's prayer also suggests a pan(en)theistic worldview,[20] as it says that God has his dwelling place in all the parts of the universe, heaven, air, earth and sea, and that God transcends it all. God is omnipresent and omniscient. In the same prayer, Josephus has Solomon remark that God sees and hears everything. God's omniscience is also referred to in Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent. "Neither what is done, nor what is thought is hidden from you". Two passages confirm this idea. BJ 5.413 describes God as "seeing every secret thing and hearing all that is buried in silence", and CA 2.294 mentions that everything is under the eye of God.[21]

There is, however, no instance in which Josephus calls God αἰώνιος, 'eternal'. In Solomon's first prayer at the Temple, only God's dwelling is called eternal.[22]

This first category encompasses concepts used to designate God that have their origin in Greek philosophy; the only attribute of God in this category that is also used for human relationships is the word "father". As we shall see, the two subordinate categories, by contrast, contain only such words.

II. God as Ruler

1. *Master*

The word Josephus most commonly uses to invoke God is δεσπότης, 'master'. According to J.B. Fischer, Josephus used this word as a replacement for the Tetragrammaton in his Hebrew source texts. This is in

[19] The other instances are AJ 6.222, 223; 8.408 and 10.239.
[20] See pp. 157–158.
[21] See the discussion of Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, pp. 117–118.
[22] AJ 8.107.

contrast with the Septuagint which used κύριος, 'lord'.[23] Josephus uses the latter only twice as referring to God, and in only once in the vocative in a prayer.[24]

The word Josephus uses most often when people address God is δεσπότης. It is also generally used in Greek prayers to invoke a god. In human relationships the word means master, as opposed to slave or servant. We see this relationship between God and man explicitly in the prayer Josephus attributes to himself. He calls himself God's servant, διάκονος. There are only two instances in which Josephus uses διάκονος or διακονία with the meaning "the service of God". Firstly, in BJ 4.629 Vespasian refers to Josephus as "that one who foretold my elevation to power and was a minister (διάκονος) of the voice of God". This refers back to the moment of Josephus' prayer, so his choice of words is consistent. Most of the time, the words διακονία and διάκονος are used to denote a master-servant relationship among human beings. Sometimes they refer to temple service. Beside the aforementioned references in *De bello Judaico*, there is one text in *Antiquitates* that speaks of the service of God. When Hannah beseeches God to give her children, she promises that her child will be "consecrated to the service (διακονία) of God".[25] The words θεραπεύειν (to serve) and δοῦλος (slave) and related forms are those often used by Josephus to refer to the relation between humans and God. In AJ 11.90, Zerubbabel and Jeshua call themselves "slaves of God". Cyrus uses the same words in his letter a few sections later, speaking of the Jews and their leaders who he says should rebuild the Temple.[26] However, in prayers only δοῦλος occurs, and only once: Joshua refers to Moses in his prayer as "your servant", τοῦ σοῦ δούλον.[27]

Words like δεσπότης and διάκονος characterise the relationship between God and man as hierarchical, with God having authority over human beings. Other terms in this category are consonant with this, tending to suggest the same conception of the relationship between God and mankind.

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[23] Fischer, 'The Term', 132, 136.
[24] Izates, AJ 20.90.
[25] Hannah's vow, AJ 5.344.
[26] AJ 11.101.
[27] AJ 5.39. See also Begg, *Flavius*, 11 n. 111.

2. *King*

The clearest case is βασιλεύς, 'king'.[28] In only one prayer does Josephus use this word to denote the relationship between God and the world. The origin is obviously biblical: the invocation in Onias' prayer, βασιλεὺς τῶν ὅλων, "king of the universe", is equivalent to the Hebrew formula מלך העולם. This is also apparent from the fact that outside the prayers Josephus only speaks of God being king or of 'God's kingdom' when this is prompted by the biblical source text.[29] When Samuel is upset because the people want a king, God tells him that they do not reject him (Samuel), but God, in not wanting him to reign (βασιλεύσῃ) alone.[30] Later, God is angry with Saul, because when they defeated the Amalekites, he and the people did things that had not been permitted by God: because God was the one who gave them the power to conquer the enemy, he is offended that they disobey him and treat him with "such contempt and disobedience as they would show to no human king".[31]

3. *Witness and judge*

There are a few instances in which words from the legal sphere are used to invoke or designate God. The most frequently occurring is μάρτυς, 'witness'. God is called on as a witness to the justice of certain actions. This happens on several occasions, both in passages that have been counted as prayers in this study and in passages that were considered too short to add them to the list of prayers.[32] In one instance Pheroras' wife asks God to be her witness that she speaks the truth regarding her husband's regret at attempting to kill his brother Herod. She calls God a witness "who cannot be deceived" (πλανηθῆναι μὴ δυνάμενος).[33] In AJ 5.113 the tribes argue that they erected altars for the right reasons, asking that God be their "trustworthy" (ἀξιόχρεως) witness. Moses asks God, in his prayer outside Datham's tent, to be his "incorruptible" (ἀδωροδόκητος) witness.[34] There is not always an adjective accompanying the word 'witness', but the instances mentioned here show that in Josephus' work God is taken to be a substantial and reliable witness.

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[28] Onias, AJ 14.24.
[29] Schlatter, *Wie*, 11.
[30] AJ 6.38, parallel to 1 Sam 8:7.
[31] AJ 6.142.
[32] See the discussion of Moses outside Datham's tent, p. 113, n. 232.
[33] Pheroras' wife, BJ 1.595.
[34] AJ 4.46.

A word that says more about the relationship between God and the person praying is δικαστής, 'judge'. There is only one prayer in which God is called on to act as a judge (the above mentioned prayer by Moses outside Datham's tent), but outside prayers there are more instances where Josephus calls God δικαστής or κριτής (which also means 'judge'). In his own speech in BJ 5, Josephus says that the forefathers always conquered their enemies if it pleased God, their "judge", κριτής.[35] David says that God will be judge (δικαστής) of his and Saul's character and their actions when they become reconciled.[36]

Speaking of God as a 'judge' corresponds with the several occasions on which the person praying asks God to exact punishment (δίκη) on someone. This happens in two prayers. One case is again in Moses' prayer outside Datham's tent, in which Moses asks God to exact punishment on those who treated him badly. The other case is when the priests in Jerusalem, with the city under siege by Aretas and Hyrcanus, beseech God to exact punishment because their fellow countrymen deny them their sacrificial victims for the Passover sacrifice.[37] In addition, Shimei thanks God for the punishment he exacted on David by depriving him of his kingdom for the crimes he committed against Saul.[38]

Having looked at the attributes of God manifest in the prayers we can now turn to an attribute of God that is conspicuously absent: δίκαιος, 'righteousness'. While there are occasions on which the person praying asks God to grant someone a just mind (David asks for Solomon to be given a sound and just mind)[39] or to improve someone's concern for righteousness (as Herod asks for his sons),[40] there is no prayer in which God himself is called righteous. Outside of the prayers righteousness *is* attributed to God. In AJ 4.217 Josephus says in the discussion of the law that "God's power is justice", and in BJ 7 Eleazar says in his speech that God is "man's true and righteous lord" (ἀληθὴς καὶ δίκαιος).[41] Moreover, Josephus' own comment when he describes Haman's punishment is that he recognises God's wisdom and justice (δικαιοσύνη) in doing this.[42] Josephus clearly knows God as righteous;[43] it therefore

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[35] BJ 5.390.
[36] AJ 6.318.
[37] The priests accompanying Aristobulus, AJ 14.28.
[38] Shimei, AJ 7.208.
[39] AJ 7.381.
[40] Herod, AJ 17.13.
[41] BJ 7.323.
[42] AJ 11.268.
[43] See also the discussion of Noah's prayer after the Flood, p. 62.

seems all the more strange that he does not mention this attribute in his prayers. For some reason he preferred to use other words to express God's righteousness, such as those borrowed from the legal sphere that we discussed above.[44]

4. *Power*

This category also includes terms referring to God's power. Within prayers, Josephus uses two words to denote God's power, δύναμις and ἰσχύς. Within prayers the common word κράτος refers only to human power. Also, since requests to God to give power to people are about human rather than divine power we do not include the prayers in which Josephus refers to this kind of request. The word δύνμαις as divine power occurs in six prayers and ἰσχύς in two. In five of the eight cases the power of God is called on to perform some seemingly impossible act. At the Red Sea Moses asks God to manifest his power; the result is the splitting of the sea. In his prayer outside Datham's tent, after asking God to punish the offenders by causing them to be swallowed by the earth, Moses says: "may this be for all an exposition of your power".[45] Elijah calls on God's power in his contest with the Baal priests. Elisha asks God to reveal his power to his servant, resulting in a host of horses and chariots circling round him.[46] Joshua's prayer belongs here as well, as he says that God has the power to heal the despondency of the people.[47] The three remaining instances mention God's power in a more general way. In the Valley of Blessing the people bless God's power after their victory over the Ammanites. At the end of his prayer at the Red Sea Moses says that he hopes God will help "if it suits your power". And Solomon wants God to grant the people he esteems "whatever a god has power to".[48] Outside prayers, Josephus uses all three words (including κρατός) to denote the power of God.[49]

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[44] It needs to be stressed that Josephus does not use these words in an eschatological context: God's judgment refers to specific situations as are related in the story. Eschatology is no issue in Josephus' prayers, or anywhere else in his work. Grabbe, 'Eschatology', 177–182.

[45] Moses at the Red Sea: AJ 2.336 and Moses outside Datham's tent: AJ 4.49.

[46] Elijah at Mount Carmel, AJ 8.342 and Elisha soothing his servant, AJ 9.55.

[47] AJ 5.41.

[48] The people in the Valley of Blessing, AJ 9.15; Moses at the Red Sea: AJ 2.337 and Solomon's second prayer at the Temple: AJ 8.113.

[49] See Schlatter, *Wie*, 44.

5. *Wrath*

Finally, not an epithet, but definitely an attribute of God that belongs to this category, is the concept of God's wrath or anger. As in the biblical tradition, Josephus often speaks of God's anger or resentment. Josephus has several ways of expressing God's anger.[50] In Cain's prayer ὀργή ('wrath') is intensified by χαλεπότερος, 'more severe', asking God not to visit his wrath on him too severely.[51] The verb χαλεπαίνειν, 'to be angry', is used in a prayer by Samuel when he asks God not to be angry at Saul for not following God's commands.[52] Solomon's second prayer at the Temple speaks of God's wrath as a character trait, saying that the voice is the best instrument to thank someone who is "wrathful and ill-willed", μηνίοντα καὶ δυσμεναίνοντα.[53]

But the word that Josephus uses most frequently in the prayers is ὀργή, 'wrath'.[54] Six of the seven prayers use this word, asking God not to be angry or to let his wrath go, as for example Phinehas does in his prayer on behalf of the eleven tribes.[55] Only one prayer asks God to redirect his anger: David wants God to be angry with him instead of with the people.[56] The reasons for God's anger are always well founded: murder (Cain), irresponsible behaviour (Noah after the Flood, Phinehas, Samson), or not following God's commands (both of David's prayers and Samuel's prayer for Saul).

Mentioning God's wrath often goes together with asking God for forgiveness, or for him to be merciful.[57] These are attributes that belong in the third category: God as protector.

III. God as Protector

The previous category showed God standing above mankind, being the people's master and ruler. The third category is grounded in a

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[50] See Schlatter, *Wie*, 59.
[51] Cain, AJ 1.58.
[52] Samuel's prayer for Saul to be forgiven, AJ 6.143.
[53] AJ 8.112.
[54] Cain, AJ 1.58; Noah after the Flood, AJ 1.96–98; Phinehas, AJ 5.159; Hebrews, AJ 5.256; Samson, AJ 5.302; David asking for forgiveness, AJ 7.321 and David asking for the pestilence to stop, AJ 7.327–328.
[55] Phinehas, AJ 5.159.
[56] David asking for the pestilence to stop, AJ 7.328.
[57] See the discussion of Phinehas' prayer, pp. 125–126.

similar difference in status between God and man, but the relationship is somewhat more intimate in nature.

A. *Providence*

The basis is the idea that God provides for the Jewish people, an idea summed up in the word πρόνοια (*pronoia*). Earlier we argued that Josephus uses this idea instead of the covenant theology manifest in the Bible.[58] Josephus nowhere mentions the covenant explicitly, but by using *pronoia* and speaking of God as helper and ally, he expresses the same kind of bond between God and mankind. An important difference, however, is that Josephus includes all mankind in his theology and not just the Jewish people as is the essence of biblical covenant theology.

1. *Protector*

God's role as protector of the people has various elements. To start with, God is the protector of human beings. This theme is explicit in David's prayer for Solomon, where David calls God the "protector and guardian" (προστάτης καὶ κηδεμών) of the Hebrew nation. Strangely enough, there is no other prayer that invokes God in such terms.[59] However, when Samuel asks God to extend his right hand over the people, he too is asking for protection.[60]

As we saw in the discussion of David's prayer, the concept of God as προστάτης, 'protector', originated in the Greek world. Josephus did not hesitate to present it as an attribute of God. He does this on four occasions, one of which is in David's prayer. The other cases are as follows. Joseph wishes for his brother Benjamin that God will be his protector (AJ 2.122). Moses says the same thing to the people in his parting speech (AJ 4.185). And David calls God both Solomon's (AJ 7.340) and the people's (AJ 7.380) protector.

The concept of God as guardian, κηδεμών, of the Hebrew people occurs more frequently outside prayers, especially in connection with the verb κήδεσθαι, 'to care for' or 'to protect'. When David is standing

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[58] See the discussion of Moses' prayer at the Red Sea, pp. 95–97.

[59] There is a conjecture for AJ 20.90, Izates' prayer, that suggests the insertion of προστατής.

[60] See also Jehoshaphat, AJ 9.8–9. He does not mention 'protection', but the purport of the prayer is as such: he asks God to fight for the city and repel the people who dare to come against the Temple.

before Goliath, he addresses him with these provocative words: "I will cut off your head (…) and all men shall learn that the Hebrews have the deity for their protection (προέστηκεν) and that in his care (κηδόμενον) for us he is our armour and strength (…)".[61] In BJ 6, after the extensive description of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, Josephus says that there had been a warning: four years before the war, someone started ranting about an impending disaster for Jerusalem, the people and the Temple. In fact, he kept up his warnings for over seven years, until he was killed during the siege.[62] After relating this story, Josephus comments: "Reflecting on these things one will find that God has a care (κηδόμενον) for men and by all kinds of premonitory signs shows his people the way of salvation".[63] God as protector is a recurring theme both in Josephus' prayers and in the rest of his work.

Moreover, the theme of God as protector recurs even more often in the form of God as rescuer.[64] In prayers this occurs not so much in the form of invocations but rather as requests by people who ask God to deliver them from some impending evil. The verbs used for such requests are σώζειν and ῥύεσθαι. Both occur in five prayers.[65]

God is mainly asked to protect people, but there are instances concerning the protection of the city (Jehoshaphat) and temple (Solomon). These verbs are also frequently used outside prayers.[66]

2. *Helper*

Linked to God as protector and rescuer is God as helper, βοηθός, which occurs in various forms in several prayers. At the Red Sea Moses calls God "ally and helper". There is one more prayer in which the word is used as an epithet of God: in the blessing for his son, Isaac says that God has promised to be "a helper and a giver of better things".[67] The verb βοηθεῖν, 'to help', is used in connection with two prayers.

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[61] AJ 6.187.
[62] BJ 6.300–309.
[63] BJ 6.310.
[64] 'Saviour', σωτήρ, referring to God, does not occur in Josephus.
[65] σώζειν: Noah after the Flood, AJ 1.97; Moses outside Datham's tent, AJ 4.50; Israelites under the Madianites, AJ 5.212; David asking for the pestilence to stop, AJ 7.328; Solomon's second prayer at the Temple, AJ 8.115; [Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, AJ 10.199 in a *varia lectio*]. ῥύεσθαι: Samson, AJ 5.302; Joash, AJ 9.175; Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream, AJ 10.199; Mordecai, AJ 11.229–230; The priests after Nicanor's threats, AJ 12.407.
[66] See also Schlatter, *Wie*, 66.
[67] Isaac's blessing, AJ 1.272.

The first instance is a request by Hezekiah who asks for help when the Assyrians have asked him to surrender.[68] The other instance is one of the few answers to prayers: when the Hebrews are in danger of being attacked by the Philistines, and realise they have blundered, they repent and ask for God's forbearance. God is persuaded and is prepared to help them, (ἔμελλεν αὐτοῖς βοηθεῖν).[69] Finally, βοήθεια, 'help', is mentioned four times in three prayers. Samson asks God to offer help and to rescue him.[70]

Asa asks God for victory and the destruction of the enemy, as only God's help "can make the few triumph over the many".[71] Solomon mentions βοήθεια twice, referring back to his supplication for the people to be delivered from their misfortunes. In both instances he stresses that the help is asked for not only for the Jewish people, but for everyone.[72] The soldiers and officers who acclaim Archelaus as king ask God to be his helper too, using the uncommon word συλλήπτωρ, which occurs only once in Josephus.[73]

God as βοηθός is used by Josephus nine times in total: twice in connection with a prayer. What is striking is that eight of these nine instances are in the first four books of *Antiquitates*, which are parallel to the Jewish Torah. Obviously there is a biblical connotation to the word. The single instance outside this part of Josephus' work comes in his own speech to the Jews, when he urges them to surrender to the Romans. He recalls all of their impious actions and asks: "And after all this do you expect him, thus outraged, to be your ally? Righteous suppliants are you, forsooth, and pure the hands with which you appeal to your helper!"[74]

3. *Ally*

The latter example already shows us another attribute of God that belongs to the *pronoia*-theme: God as ally. As was said above, in his prayer at the Red Sea Moses calls God "ally and helper": σύμμαχος καὶ βοηθός.[75] Standing on its own, σύμμαχος, 'ally', occurs in three

[68] Hezekiah asking for help, AJ 10.11.
[69] Hebrews, AJ 5.256.
[70] Samson, AJ 5.302.
[71] Asa, AJ 8.293.
[72] AJ 8.116, 117.
[73] Soldiers and officers, AJ 17.195.
[74] BJ 5.403.
[75] AJ 2.334.

prayers. On his death bed, Mattathias transfers his duties to his sons and prays to God to be their ally.[76] Both Judas and Izates ask God to be their ally when they fear an approaching enemy.[77] In combination with 'helper' σύμμαχος occurs twice outside prayers: in Josephus' own speech in BJ 5 (see above) and in the speech Moses delivers at the border of Canaan.[78] However, Josephus frequently uses the word in connection with God.[79] Just as the previously discussed attributes of 'protector', 'rescuer' and 'helper', 'ally' is obviously also an epithet that Josephus thinks fitting for God.

B. *Other attributes*

1. *Graciousness*

In many prayers, the person praying does not ask for God's help or protection specifically, but rather for God to be 'gracious', εὐμενής. Josephus uses this word in prayers in connection with God ten times, in nine prayers.[80] Seven of these prayers ask God to be gracious. Noah's prayer asks him to accept his offer graciously. In Isaac's blessing εὐμενής occurs twice. One of these occurrences is a request for graciousness, the other is a reference to God's gracious protection in the past. Solomon turns this around by saying that God should be appeased (made gracious, εὐμενῆ δεξιοῦσθαι), and does not ask God to be gracious. Outside prayers, εὐμενής is the word that Josephus uses most frequently to refer to God's benevolence.[81]

Similar to εὐμενής is ἵλεως, 'propitious'. Josephus does not use this word frequently, and then only in connection with prayers (or offerings). Joab asks God to continue to be propitious (ἵλεως) when an old woman tells him that he is bent on destroying an Israelite city (Abel

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[76] Mattathias, AJ 12.285.

[77] Judas at Bethsur, AJ 12.314 and Izates, AJ 20.90.

[78] AJ 3.302.

[79] See Attridge, *Interpretation*, 79 n.1; as Attridge has pointed out (p. 78 n. 1), in *Wie sprach Josephus von Gott?* Schlatter strangely enough did not treat the subject of God as ally.

[80] Noah after the Flood, AJ 1. 98; Isaac's blessing, AJ 1.272, 273; People at Mount Sinai, AJ 3.78; Michal AJ 7.87; David asking for forgiveness, AJ 7.321, Benaiah, AJ 7.357; Solomon's second prayer at the Temple, AJ 8.112; people repenting, AJ 10.64; Zerubbabel, AJ 11.64.

[81] Schlatter, *Wie*, 62.

Beth-Macaah).[82] And in AJ 10 Josiah has assembled the people and they repent and swear that they will keep the laws of Moses. In their prayer they ask God to be both "gracious and propitious" (εὐμενής καὶ ἵλεως), which indicates their parallel meaning.[83] These two words also occur in combination in AJ 4.243, where Josephus describes the regulations concerning the offering of tithes. Having offered these one must ask God to be εὐμενὴς καὶ ἵλεως. Another instance in the law is AJ 4.222, where the priests have to ask God to be gracious after a certain ritual that must be performed when a criminal cannot be found.[84] The final reference is not strictly a prayer but comes close. It occurs in a passage concerning offerings by Romans to their deceased relatives and to Chaerea who has recently been executed: the Roman people ask him to be gracious.[85]

Finally, there is God's 'goodness', χρηστότης, which is mentioned in two prayers: Ezra's prayer about mixed marriages and Izates' prayer. In the former, Ezra hopes God will discharge the people from their sin, saying that he leaves it to God's goodness. Izates' mention of God's goodness is more complicated and obviously an allusion to Psalmic language.[86] Outside prayers the 'goodness' of God is not mentioned by Josephus.[87]

2. *Pity*

Related to God's graciousness is his pity: οἶκτος, ἔλεος or ἐλεεῖν ('to have pity'). There are three prayers asking God to have pity using οἶκτος. Hagar wants God to have pity when she flies from Sarah; Amram's request for pity is because of the repression of the Pharaoh and his order to kill all Hebrew boys.[88] When the Israelites, in the time of the Judges, realise that their calamities are the result of their own contempt for the law, they ask the prophetess Deborah to pray to God to have pity on them.[89] Three more prayers use ἐλεεῖν. David asks God to take pity on his people because of the famine. Solomon asks God to have pity on the people who take refuge in the temple.

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[82] Joab, AJ 7.290.
[83] The people repenting, AJ 10.64.
[84] On both these passages see resp. pp. 53 and 51.
[85] AJ 19.272.
[86] See the discussion of Izates' prayer, pp. 204–205.
[87] See also the discussion of Ezra's prayer about mixed marriages, pp. 190–191.
[88] Hagar, AJ 1.188; Amram, AJ 2.211.
[89] Israelites through Deborah, AJ 5.200–201.

And Esther asks God to have pity on her when she must go to the king.[90] Moreover, two more prayers mention God's pity. In his prayer outside Datham's tent, Moses refers to the pity God showed the Hebrew people in the past. And Daniel gives thanks to God for the revelation concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream because he had taken pity on their youth.[91]

Outside prayers, the motif of God's pity occurs several more times, mostly indicated by the verb ἐλεεῖν.[92] In several cases there is a connection to a prayer. In AJ 2.212 God takes pity on Amram in response to his prayer. And another instance is when Hezekiah sends friends to Isaiah to ask him to beseech God to take pity on his people (AJ 10.12). It is noteworthy, however, that the idea only occurs in the biblical part of *Antiquitates*. Josephus uses it in prayers as much as in the rest of his work, but only in biblical contexts.

IV. Is God Listening?

As we saw above, there are ways of indicating that God listened to a prayer. Following Amram's prayer, Josephus says that God took pity on Amram and "moved by his supplication" told him in a dream that he no longer needed to worry.[93] After Daniel's prayer for an explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, God again takes pity and tells him what he needs to know.[94]

To indicate that God heard a prayer, Josephus uses ἐπήκοος or (in one instance) ἐπακούειν. At Marah, God gives the people drinkable water in response to Moses' request. Samuel's prayer is heard by God and his sacrifice is accepted, and God grants the people victory and triumph.[95] Elisha's request to take away the fear of his servant is granted too. All of the prayers that ask God to manifest his power are answered.[96] In

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[90] David concerning the famine, AJ 7.294; Solomon's second prayer at the temple, AJ 8.115 and Esther, AJ 11.232.

[91] Moses outside Datham's tent, AJ 4.40; Daniel's thanksgiving, AJ 10.202, using ἔλεος instead of οἶκτος.

[92] ἐλεεῖν: AJ 2.212; 6.42; 10.27; 10.200, 203, 242; 11.1. Moreover, ἔλεος occurs in AJ 1.304; 4.239, 269; and οἰκτός in AJ 5.187; 7.209.

[93] AJ 2.212.

[94] AJ 10.200.

[95] Moses at Marah: AJ 3.7 and Samuel: AJ 6.25.

[96] See above.

addition, both Manasseh's and Izates' prayers are heard by God, as is Leah's supplication to be given children.[97]

The three vows that Josephus has recorded are also examples of heard prayers, since all three of the vows were fulfilled: Jacob calls the place Bethel, Jephthah sacrifices his daughter, and Hannah brings her son Samuel to the temple to dedicate his life to God.[98]

These are not the only examples of prayers that were answered by God. Most of the prayers by far are answered by God, and in many cases it is explicitly stated: people got the children they wished for, won the battles they asked to win, and got the protection they needed. But there are seven prayers that were not answered. The prayer by Joseph's brothers, asking God not to let Joseph's dream come true in which it was predicted that his brothers would bow down to him, is obviously not answered: Joseph becomes Pharaoh's minister and his brothers come to him to ask for food. David's prayer for his sick son is not answered either: his son dies; and Rehoboam and the multitude who pray for victory do not get God on their side. Elijah asks God to let him die and this request is not granted either.[99] Of these four prayers, only Elijah's prayer has a parallel in its biblical source text: a prayer that, obviously, is not answered either.

The remaining three prayers that are not answered concern one and the same person: Saul. All three are parallelled by the biblical text. Through the high priest Achitob, Saul asks God whether they can proceed to the enemy and destroy them. God, however, does not answer; and neither does he at Gilboa when Saul asks an oracle (again through a priest) about the upcoming battle.[100] The first time, Saul says he knows why God does not listen: it is because of some "secret sin". He is determined to find the person responsible and when he has succeeded (it turns out to be his own son Jonathan) he destroys many enemies. Some sections later, however, he himself makes a mistake in saving the life of the king of the Amalekites, which is against God's will. Samuel asks God on his behalf to forgive Saul,[101] but God refuses: Saul had acted against God's command and should therefore not be forgiven.

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[97] Manasseh: AJ 10.41, Izates: AJ 20.91 and Leah: AJ 1.304.

[98] Jacob: AJ 1.284; Jephthah: AJ 5.266 and Hannah: AJ 5.347.

[99] The brothers of Joseph: AJ 2.12; David's prayer for his sick son: AJ 7.154; Rehoboam and the multitude: AJ 8.255; Elijah's prayer to die: AJ 8.348.

[100] Saul through high priest Achitob: AJ 6.122; Saul at Gilboa: AJ 6.328.

[101] AJ 8.143.

Apart from these seven prayers, it seems tenable to say that God's answering of almost all prayers fits in with the image we saw in Chapter 4, where it was argued that most of the prayers in Josephus' work were recorded with a specific goal in mind. If God had not been depicted as answering people's prayers, there would have been no point in using prayers in the accounts. Even in cases where prayers were not answered, there was always a clear reason for God not to do so: God was angry at the person who prayed and before granting their wishes, they had to pay a penalty. Only Elijah's prayer falls outside this scope, but it is obvious that Elijah was not supposed to die; the prayer (in both *Antiquitates* and 1 Kings) illustrates Elijah's desperation rather than a genuine request.

V. Conclusions

In the present chapter we have seen that many facets of God are revealed in the prayers in Josephus' work. The different epithets and attributes were divided into three categories, the first category, consisting mostly of philosophical principles and concepts, encompasses the second and third, which consist of terms expressing the relationship between God and man: respectively a hierarchical and a more intimate relationship.

There is no prayer that explicitly manifests a monotheistic theology: not even the two prayers that use the word μόνος call God the only God. The Israelites at Mount Carmel call God "the only true god" and Izates says that he *hopes* he has rightly considered God as the only lord of all. However, from texts other than his prayers we know that Josephus was a monotheist, and his prayers give us no reason to think otherwise.

Three things stand out from the present chapter: the word Josephus uses most for God in his prayers is δεσπότης, 'master'. This is understandable since δεσπότης is commonly used in Greek literature as a vocative to invoke a god. Josephus seems to use it as a rendering of the common Hebrew way to address God, the Tetragrammaton. It shows the relationship between God and man clearly, as is fitting for prayers: man standing below God and asking him for help and benefits.

However, the words from the third category occur even more frequently in the prayers. Evidently, in the prayers, Josephus pictures an intimate relationship between God and man: people praying invoke

God as master, but they also propitiate him by calling him their gracious protector, the one who takes care of them. And Josephus' God accepts this responsibility: most of the time he listens to people's prayers and answers them.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Thanks to Josephus, who was, after all, one of the most important Jewish writers of his time, we know a great deal more about post-biblical Jewish history than we would otherwise have known. Moreover, since many of his sources are known to us (even if we do not know exactly in what form or even what language they were at his disposal), we are able to investigate how he made use of his source material: did he add a story, leave one out or change it? And if so, in what way? This kind of research can give us a better insight into Josephus' view of the history of which his stories formed part, of the characters portrayed in the stories and of the theology (or philosophy) conveyed in them.

Countless studies have been written on Josephus and his works. However, no in-depth study on prayer in his work has ever been carried out. Apart from some minor articles, the subject has remained virgin territory, even though the subject of prayer in antiquity has received more and more attention over the past century. Since Josephus is one of the most important Jewish authors of the Graeco-Roman era, and his work contains so large a corpus of prayers, an investigation into his views on prayer is an essential addition to the field of prayer studies.

The study of Josephus and his work may also benefit from an analysis of his prayers, because prayers are self-contained units (comparable to speeches and dreams) and it is therefore easy for him to change the source text without abandoning the main story line. Josephus has thus managed to change details in the story and to convey his own interpretation, sometimes of the story and at others of theological matters.

A. *Josephus on prayer*

Josephus wrote two passages on the subject of prayer. Together with a few shorter passages, they give an image of how Josephus sees the liturgical act of prayer: what to do, when to do it and what to ask for.

The first passage, in *Contra Apionem*, shows that it was common practice to pray at the sacrifice when it was performed in the Temple. This is a reflection of Josephus' contemporary surroundings rather than biblical tradition, since the combination of sacrifice and prayer was not yet familiar in the Torah; it was only instituted at a later period.

The community played an important part in the ritual. According to Josephus, people are born for the community and therefore they should pray for the community first. This view was confirmed by analysis of several of the actual prayers in Josephus' work, which showed that important characters such as Moses, his father Amram and Daniel placed the interests of other people above their own.

Josephus also had very strict ideas on what people should and should not pray for; at the sacrifice they should not ask God to give them 'good things', since God already did so. Rather should people ask for the capacity to receive these good things and keep them. From several instances in which Josephus writes about good things, these are probably matters such as 'a healthy life' and 'wellbeing', rather than inner qualities or attributes.

A comparison between the prayer texts and this passage in *Contra Apionem* leads to the conclusion that, most of the time, Josephus' characters keep to the rules. Although there is an obvious difference between the kinds of prayer in *Contra Apionem* (liturgical) and in the stories (occasional), it is still useful to compare them. There is no reason to assume that rules for prayers for occasional use (had he written them) would have been any different from those Josephus describes for liturgical prayers in *Contra Apionem*.

In the second passage, in *Antiquitates*, Josephus discusses daily prayer without any reference to sacrifice. The daily prayer should be performed twice a day. Even though there are other sources that mention prayer three times a day, Josephus is clear on this point: both in this passage and in the rest of his work there is no sign of a third prayer. The subject of the prayer should be thanksgiving, that is, thanking God for his gift of delivering the people out of Egypt. Such thanksgiving serves not only in return for the past, but also as a spur for more such gifts in the future.

Many scholars suggest that in this passage Josephus is referring to the practice of reciting the *Shema'*, but this does not seem tenable. The *Shema'* is a confession of faith rather than a prayer; moreover, there is no thanksgiving in the *Shema'*, whereas this appears to be the most important aspect of the daily prayers for Josephus.

The two passages contain few aspects that derive directly from the Torah. Many elements of the *Contra Apionem* passage can be found in contemporary authors, whether Jewish, Chistian or Graeco-Roman. The *Antiquitates* passage appears to be more biblical (the next section even gives the biblical directions for using the *tefillin* and the *mezuzah*,

though without using those words); however, there is no direct parallel in the Torah for the daily prayers, either.

The minor references give various fragments of information. They point to prayer as a professional task to be performed by the priests (Aaron was the first to be given this task, and God could not refuse his requests, because he himself had chosen Aaron to be his servant). There are also references to prayers for personal ends, for example, when one is ill or needs God's assistance in a lawsuit. These latter references come closest to the prayers in Josephus' stories.

Josephus mentions two different attitudes of prayer: raising one's hands to heaven and prostrating oneself. Both of these attitudes occur in biblical literature. In Josephus' version of the law there are hardly any references to prayer. The most conspicuous is in the long passage about the Essenes in *De bello Judaico*, where Josephus describes their custom of praying to the sun every morning. Josephus obviously means that they worship the sun as a deity, and this is confirmed in a later section where he speaks of the "rays of the deity" whom the Essenes do not want to offend.

B. *Definition*

In order to compile a list of the prayers, it was necessary first to arrive at a definition of prayer. Combining Judith Newman's definition with element of Moshe Greenberg's and Miller's definitions, we arrived at the following: a prayer is an address to God that is initiated by humans; it is not conversational in nature; and it includes address to God in the second person, although it may include third person description of God; moreover, the address expresses dependence upon God and the praying person is expecting a response.

C. *Josephus: a Jew in Rome*

The analysis of the 32 prayers provided us with a great deal of material, which is hard to capture in a few paragraphs. There are, however, some overall conclusions to be drawn.

The prayers reflect what is commonly known about Josephus: he often uses Graeco-Roman terminology to express Jewish concepts. There has been much discussion on Josephus' reasons for doing so. I do not think that Josephus was continually trying to choose the right words in order to accommodate his readers or avoid offending anyone; Josephus wrote in the language of his surroundings. He grew up in Palestine, which had

been part of the Hellenistic world for over three hundred years, and he had had a Hellenistic education. By the time he wrote *Antiquitates*, which contains most of the prayers, he had lived in Rome for over 20 years and all this time he had lived and breathed the Graeco-Roman world. It seems only logical to assume that the language of Hellenistic culture was his own, which is why he used the words and concepts of this culture to express his thoughts. This shows in his use of words like δημιουργός ('creator'), εὐμενής ('gracious') and ἀπροσδεής ('not in need of anything') as attributes of God, as does his use of concepts like εὐδαιμονία, happy life and πρόνοια, 'providence'.

However, there are also concepts in the prayers that are specifically Jewish. God as king of the universe, the issues of the unspoken name of God and God the giver of Jewish law: all of these occur in the prayers as well. However, this still does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Josephus lived 'between Jerusalem and Rome' as many put it, and that he bridged the two cultures by combining Jewish and Graeco-Roman elements: to Josephus it was one culture. Josephus' Judaism is Hellenistic Judaism: an existing mixture of Graeco-Roman and Judaean culture. Josephus and his work are a product of that culture and it therefore makes perfect sense for his work (which is, after all a reflection of the culture of his time and age) to incorporate terms and concepts from both the traditional Greek and Judaean cultures.

This does not, however, preclude the possibility that certain words or concepts should be regarded as specifically Jewish rather than Hellenistic in a more general sense. Furthermore, it is to be expected that certain Jewish concepts were more common to the people in Judea and to Jews living elsewhere than they were to, for example, Greeks, Romans or Egyptians. Josephus was undeniably Jewish and, since he used the Jewish Bible as a source for his work, there are, logically, specifically Jewish traces. The use of prayers seems to be one of these 'traces'; there are no examples of such frequent use of prayers in contemporary Greek or Roman historiography, but there are in the Jewish Bible. It is therefore probable that Josephus' use of prayers was inspired by this source. The Jewish concepts mentioned earlier may have had their origin in the Jewish Bible as well, but Josephus probably knew them from his own experience: being of priestly descent, he had, after all, received a Jewish education. However, Josephus was a *Hellenistic* Jew; when he wrote about his history and put his beliefs into words he used his own words, which might to us appear either Jewish or Greek, but to him it was not a case of two different worlds, but of one Hellenistic world.

D. *Considering the prayers*

1. *Providence*

One of the concepts that stands out in the prayers is πρόνοια, 'providence'. It would appear from the prayers that Josephus uses this word to express the special bond between God and the Jewish people, equivalent to the biblical covenant. This is not a feature peculiar to the prayers, Attridge has shown that it occurs throughout Josephus' work. The prayers are a further expression of its use. Moreover, in several prayers the concept of providence is used by the person praying who makes an appeal to God's providence, or invokes God in terms that belong in the realm of providence, such as 'ally', 'helper' or 'protector'.

2. *Functions*

Most of the prayers have a specific function in the text. As we said above, the prayers are self-contained units within a text: Josephus is enabled to tell a story and keep to the storyline of the source text, but angle the story by adding a prayer or by changing the content of an existing prayer. In this way he manages to put his own stamp on his stories. He used the prayers to stress particular features of the story or even turning points in history. He also used prayers to portray certain characters as, for example, a great leader or a wise man. And in several places he even managed to alter a story slightly, for example, by shifting the initiative for a certain action from the person praying to God (or vice versa) and sometimes by shifting the emphasis in a story or making it sound more romantic.

There are also prayers that Josephus used as a vehicle for his theological or philosophical views. The theology that emerges from the prayers does not appear to differ from that in the rest of Josephus' work. Almost all the concepts that are used in the prayers also occurred elsewhere. The relationship between God and man that Josephus seems to have in mind may either be one in which God has a rather abstract or philosophical role as origin of the universe, as deity; or one in which the relationship may be described in terms of personal contact; God may play a severe role (for example, as ruler or judge) or a more gentle, even intimate role as gracious protector and helper. Whatever role is attributed to God, he always appears to listen to the prayers of the people. Whether concrete or abstract, whether gentle or severe, God is dependable and takes care of his people.

E. *Josephus' view of prayer?*

In conclusion, if we wanted a brief answer to the question, "What is the nature of prayer in Josephus' work?", the answer would be two-fold: literary and liturgical. On a literary level, Josephus uses prayer as a device to personalise the stories or convey his thoughts. Such prayers are all incidental: inspired by the moment. On a liturgical level, Josephus writes about statutory and liturgical prayer; thus he describes prayer as a religious act that everyone should perform twice a day, either at the sacrifice or for oneself. One is allowed to ask God for favours, with certain restrictions, but the main purpose of prayer should be to thank God.

APPENDIX ONE

LIST OF PRAYERS*

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Cain	AJ 1.58	Gen 4:13–14	'do not be too angry'
Noah after the Flood	AJ 1.96–98	(Gen 8:20)	no more wrath against man
Noah's prayer and curse for his sons	AJ 1.142	Gen 9:24–26	a curse on the descendants of Ham and good life for his other sons
Melchizedek	AJ 1.181	Gen 14:19–20	thanks for victory
Hagar	AJ 1.188	(Gen 16:56)	'have pity'
Abraham	AJ 1.199	Gen 18:23–32	'don't destroy the good with the bad'
The servant of Abraham searching for Rebecca	AJ 1.245	Gen 24:12–14	'help find Rebecca'
The servant of Abraham having found Rebecca	*(AJ 1.251)*	*Gen 24:26–27*	*thanks and praise*
Isaac	*(AJ 1.257)*	*Gen 25:21*	*regarding Rebecca's infertility*
Isaac's blessing	AJ 1.272–273	Gen 27:28–29	'give my son a good life and protection'
Jacob at Bethel	AJ 1.284	Gen 28:20–22	vow: safe return
Leah	AJ 1.303	(Gen 29:31)	'give me children'

* This table lists all the prayers and indicates their subject matter in each case. The table also shows that the prayers fall into four categories: firstly, prayers for which there are parallel prayers in a source text; secondly, prayers for which there are no such parallels, but the story-setting of which does occur in a source text (in these cases the parallel passages are given in brackets); thirdly, prayers for which there is no known source text (indicated by a dash); and, finally, prayers in a source text for which there is no parallel in Josephus' text (indicated by italics).

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Jacob	*(AJ 1.327)*	*Gen 32:10–13*	*'save me from my brother'*
The brothers of Joseph	AJ 2.12	(Gen 37:8)	'don't let Joseph's dream come true'
Amram	AJ 2.211	(Exod 2:1–2)	'have pity and save us'
Moses in Ethiopia	AJ 2.253	—	'thanks for victory''
Moses at the burning bush	AJ 2.275	(Exod 3:13)	'give me power and tell me your name'
Moses at the Red Sea	AJ 2.33–33	(Exod 14)	'help, rescue us'
Moses at Marah	AJ 3.6	Exod 15:25	'change the water of the spring'
Moses at Elis	AJ 3.22–23	(Exod 16:3–4)	'help the angry people'
Moses thanking for food	AJ 3.25	(Exod 16:13)	thanks for the food
Moses at Rephidim	AJ 3.34	Exod 17:4	'let the people drink'
The people at a mount Sinai	AJ 3.78	(Exod 19)	'be gracious Moses'
Moses and Aaron	AJ 3.310	(Num 14)	'help the angry people'
Moses outside Datham's tent	AJ 4.40–50	Num 16:22	'be my witness'
Balaam	AJ 4.105	Num 22:9–11	advice
Joshua	AJ 5.39–41	Josh 7:7–9	'give us the mental power to win'
Phinehas	AJ 5.159	Judg 20:27–28	'abandon your wrath'
Israelites through Deborah	AJ 5.200–201	(Judg 4:5)	'have pity'
Deborah	*(AJ 5 210)*	*Judg 5*	*praise*
Israelites under the Madianites	AJ 5.212	Judg 6:7	'save us from oppression and starvation'
Hebrews	AJ 5.256	Judg 10:10	'have pity and abandon wrath'

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Jephthah	AJ 5.263	Judg 11:30–31	vow: safe return
Manoah	AJ 5.276	(Judg 13)	'give us children'
Manoah's wife	AJ 5.280	Judg 13:8	'send the angel again'
Samson	AJ 5.302	Judg 15:18	'do not be angry and help me relieve my thirst'
Naomi	AJ 5.321	Ruth 1:8–9	'grant daughters-in-law a happy marriage'
Hannah's vow	AJ 5.344	1 Sam 1:11	vow: 'grant me children'
Hannah's praise	*(AJ 5.345)*	*1 Sam 2*	*praise*
Samuel at Mizpah	AJ 6.25	1 Sam 7:9	'help us'
Samuel's daily prayer for the name of the future king	AJ 6.49	(1 Sam 9:15)	'reveal the name of the future king'
Samuel searching Saul	AJ 6.64	1 Sam 10:22	'reveal the place where Saul is hiding'
Saul through high priest Achitob	AJ 6.122	1 Sam 14:37	request for victory and permission to destroy the enemy
The people's prayer for Jonathan	AJ 6.128	(1 Sam 14:45)	forgiveness for Jonathan
Samuel's prayer for Saul to be forgiven	AJ 6.143	1 Sam 15:11	'harbour no more wrath against Saul'
Saul's prayer for David	AJ 6.184	(1 Sam 17:37)	'reward David's courage'
Saul at Gilboa	AJ 6.328	1 Sam 28:6	information: the outcome of the battle
David at Sikella	AJ 7.7	2 Sam 2:1–2	information: where to live?
Michal	AJ 7.87	(2 Sam 6:20)	blessings for David
David's thanksgiving hymn	AJ 7.95	2 Sam 7:18–29	'thanks for all you have given'

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
David's prayer for his sick son	AJ 7.154	(2 Sam 12:16)	recovery of son
David climbing the Mount of Olives	AJ 7.202	2 Sam 15:31	'turn Absalom from Achitophel'
Shimei	AJ 7.208	2 Sam 16:6–7	thanks for punishing David
David's prayer for his army	AJ 7.235	(2 Sam 18:5)	'give victory'
Joab	AJ 7.290	(2 Sam 20:17–21)	'continue to be gracious'
David concerning the famine	AJ 7.294	2 Sam 21:1	information: what caused famine?
David refusing to drink the water	AJ 7.314	2 Sam 23:17	'thanks for the safety of my companions'
David asking for forgiveness	AJ 7.321	2 Sam 24:10	forgiveness
David asking for the pestilence to stop	AJ 7.327–328	2 Sam 24:17	'punish me, not the people'
Araunah	AJ 7.331	(2 Sam 24:22)	'accept sacrifice'
Benaiah	AJ 7.357	1 Kgs 1:36–37	'be gracious to Solomon'
The people's prayer for Solomon	AJ 7.357	(1 Kgs 1:36–37)	'grant Solomon a long reign'
David's prayer for Solomon	AJ 7.380–381	1 Chr 29:10–19	praising God and blessing Solomon and the people
Solomon's first prayer at the Temple	AJ 8.107–108	1 Kgs 8:13, 15–53; 2 Chr 6:2, 4–42	'this is your Temple'
Solomon's second prayer at the Temple	AJ 8.111–117	1 Kgs 8:13, 15–53; 2 Chr 6:2, 4–42	thanks and 'keep listening'
Solomon urging the people to pray	AJ 8.119–120	1 Kgs 8:56–61	thanks and 'stay gracious'
The people after the celebrations	AJ 8.124	1 Kgs 8:66	'let Solomon be our king for a long time'

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Jeroboam	AJ 8.234	1 Kgs 13:6 hand'	'bring back life to
Rehoboam and the multitude	AJ 8.255	(2 Chr 12:6) deliverance	victory and
The soldiers of Abijah	AJ 8.283	2 Chr 13:14 fight'	'be our ally in the
Asa	AJ 8.293	2 Chr 14:11	'help to win'
Elijah saving a child	AJ 8.326	1 Kgs 17:20–21 to life'	'bring child back
Elijah at mount Carmel	AJ 8.342	1 Kgs 18:36–37	'show your power'
Israelites at mount Carmel	AJ 8.343	1 Kgs 18:39	praise
Elijah's prayer to die	AJ 8.348	1 Kgs 19:4	'let me die'
Ahab	AJ 8.401	(1 Kgs 22:6) we win?'	information: 'will
Jehoshaphat thanking God	AJ 9.2	(2 Chr 19:3) deliverance	thanks for
Jehoshaphat asking for help	AJ 9.8–9	2 Chr 20:6–12 city'	help, 'save the
Jehoshaphat and the multitude	AJ 9.11	2 Chr 20:18	thanks
The people in the Valley of Blessing	AJ 9.15	2 Chr 20:26 power of God	praise for the
Elijah proving to be a true prophet	AJ 9.23–24	2 Kgs 1:10–12 heaven'	'send a fire from
Jehoram	AJ 9.32	(2 Kgs 3:10)	'why this defeat?'
Elisha soothing his servant	AJ 9.55	2 Chr 6:17 power'	'show your
Elisha blinding the enemy	AJ 9.56–57	2 Chr 6:18–20 the eyes of the enemy'	'blind and reopen
Joash	AJ 9.175	2 Chr 13:4	'save me'
Jonah	AJ 9.214	Jonah 2:3–10	'pardon my sins'
Hezekiah asking for help	AJ 10.11	2 Kgs 19:1	help
Hezekiah concerning Sennacherib	AJ 10.16	2 Kgs 19: 15–19 and all'	'safety for city

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Hezekiah asking for a longer life	AJ 10.26	2 Kgs 20:3	'let me live until I have children'
Isaiah	AJ 10.29	2 Kgs 20:11	'show a sign'
Hezekiah's thanksgiving	AJ 10.29	Isa 38:9–20	thanks
Manasseh	AJ 10.41	2 Chr 33:12	'make the enemy merciful'
The people repenting	AJ 10.64	(2 Kgs 23; 2 Chr 34)	'be favourable'
Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream	AJ 10.199	(Dan 2:18)	'reveal the king's dream and its meaning'
Daniel's thanksgiving	AJ 10.202	Dan 2:20–23	thanks
Nebuchadnezzar	AJ 10.217	Dan 4:34	'restore me to my kingdom'
Darius	AJ 11.31	3 Ezra 4:43	vow: 'if I become king, I'll return the vessels'
Zerubbabel	AJ 11.64–65	3 Ezra 4:59–60	thanks for graciousness
Zerubbabel's fellow countrymen	AJ 11.66	3 Ezra 4:62	thanks for returning land
Ezra after having received Xerxes' letter	AJ 11.131	Ezra 7:27–28	thanks for the king's mercy
Ezra beyond the Euphrates	AJ 11.134	Ezra 8:21	safe journey
Ezra about mixed marriages	AJ 11.143–144	Ezra 9:6–15; 3 Ezra 8:71–87	forgiveness
Nehemiah pleading for his fellow-countrymen	AJ 11.162	Neh 1:5–11	desperation
Nehemiah asking for persuasiveness	AJ 11.165	(Neh 2:3)	persuasiveness
Mordecai	AJ 11.229–230	AddEsth 4:17a–h	'help the people'
The people supporting Esther	AJ 11.231	AddEsth 4:17i	safety

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Esther approach	AJ 11.231–233	AddEsth 4:17k–z	'help me approach the king'
Jaddus	AJ 11.326	—	safety
The people in Eleazar's letter	AJ 12.55	Let. Aris. 45	success and peace for Ptolemy and the Bible translation
Elissaeus	AJ 12.98	Let. Aris. 185	blessings for the king
Mattathias	AJ 12.285	1 Macc 2:69	'be an ally and let the people have their old way of life'
Judas and company	*(AJ 12.300)*	*1 Macc 3:50–53*	*'help us'*
Judas' hymn	AJ 12.312	1 Macc 4:24	thanks for victory
Judas at Bethsur	AJ 12.314	1 Macc 4:30–33	'be our ally against the enemy'
The priests after Nicanor's threats	AJ 12.407	1 Macc 7:37–38	deliverance from the enemy
Judas at Adasa	*(AJ 12.409)*	*1 Macc 7:41–42*	*'punish the enemy'*
Jonathan preceding a fight on Sabbath	AJ 13.13	1 Macc 9:46	victory
Antigonus AJ	AJ 13.304	BJ 1.73	brother's recovery
Onias	AJ 14.24	—	'do not help either party'
The priests accompanying Aristobulus	AJ 14.28	—	'punish the wrongdoers'
Mariamme	AJ 15.208	(BJ 1.441–442)	'do not let Herod be treated favourably by Caesar'
The people thanking for Herod's temple reconstruction	AJ 15.421	—	thanks
Herod	AJ 17.13	(BJ 1.556–558)	'be an ally to my grandchildren'
Antipater	AJ 17.128	BJ 1.639	'be a witness to my innocence'

Table (*cont.*)

PRAYER	PASSAGE	PARALLEL PASSAGE	SUBJECT
Soldiers and officers	AJ 17.195	(BJ 1.668)	'help the new king'
Agrippa AJ	AJ 18.168	BJ 2.179	'let Gaius be emperor soon'
Tiberius	AJ 18.211	—	information: 'who should succeed me?'
The people's prayer for Agrippa	AJ 19.349	(BJ 2.219)	for sick Agrippa
Izates	AJ 20.90	—	'be my ally'
Antigonus BJ	BJ 1.73	(AJ 13.304)	worship on behalf of his sick brother
Pheroras' wife	BJ 1.595	(AJ 13.71)	'be a witness to the truth'
Archelaus and his people	BJ 2.88	(AJ 17.311)	prosperity in reign of Archelaus
Agrippa BJ	BJ 2.179	(AJ 18.168)	'let Tiberius die soon and let Gaius be emperor' Gaius
Josephus	BJ 3.354	—	'be my witness'
Elisha transforms the water from a spring	BJ 4.462–464	—	'cleanse the spring'
Old men and women	BJ 5.28	—	'let the Romans come'
Titus	BJ 5.519	—	'be a witness to my innocence'
Roman soldiers	BJ 6.123	—	'let them surrender before we have to destroy them'
The crowds in Rome	BJ 7.73	—	long reign for Vespasian and his sons
Vespasian and Titus at the tribunal	BJ 7.128	—	customary prayers
Vespasian and Titus after the execution of Simon	BJ 7.155	—	customary prayers

APPENDIX TWO

LIST OF PRAYER SUBJECTS

SUBJECT	PRAYER
for themselves	
abandoning wrath/forgiveness	Cain
	Noah after the Flood
	Hagar
	Phinehas
	Hebrews
	Samson
	David asking for forgiveness
	David asking for the pestilence to stop
	Jonah
	Ezra about mixed marriages
acceptance of sacrifice	Araunah
assistance in a fight/victory	Joshua
	Saul through high priest Achitob
	David climbing the Mount of Olives
	Rehoboam and the multitude
	The soldiers of Abijah
	Asa
	Judas at Bethsur
	Jonathan preceding a fight on Sabbath
	Roman soldiers
childbirth	Leah
	Manoah
	Hannah's vow
	Hezekiah asking for a longer life
cure/healing	Jeroboam
customary prayers	Vespasian and Titus at the tribunal
	Vespasian and Titus after the execution of Simon
God as witness	Moses outside Datham's tent
	Antipater
	Pheroras' wife
	Josephus
	Titus
graciousness	Joab
	Solomon uging the people to pray
help/protection	The servant of Abraham searching for Rebecca

Table (*cont.*)

SUBJECT	PRAYER
	The brothers of Joseph
	Moses at Marah
	Samson
	Samuel at Mizpah
	David climbing the Mount of Olives
	Jehoshaphat asking for help
	Joash
	Hezekiah asking for help
	Manasseh
	Nehemiah asking for persuasiveness
	Esther
	Old men and women
information	Balaam
	Moses at the burning bush
	Samuel's daily prayer for the name of the future king
	Samuel searching Saul
	Saul at Gilboa
	David at Sikella
	David concerning the famine
	Ahab
	Jehoram
	Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's dream
	Tiberius
long reign	Archelaus and his people
pity/compassion	Abraham
	Amram
	Israelites through Deborah
	Hebrews
	The people repenting
rescue	Amram
	Israelites under the Madianites
	The priests after Nicanor's threats
safety	Jacob at Bethel
	Jephthah
	Hezekiah concerning Sennacherib
	Ezra beyond the Euphrates
	The people supporting Esther
	Jaddus
sign/power of God	Manoah's wife
	Elijah at Mount Carmel
	Elijah proving to be a true prophet
	Elisha soothing his servant

Table (*cont.*)

SUBJECT	PRAYER
	Elisha blinding the enemy
	Isaiah
	Elisha transforms the water from a spring
support	Moses at the burning bush
	Saul through high priest Achitob
	Nebuchadnezzar
	Darius
	Agrippa AJ
	Izates
	Agrippa BJ
thanks/joy/praise	Melchizedek
	Moses in Ethiopia
	Moses thanking for food
	David's thanksgiving hymn
	Shimei
	David refusing to drink the water
	David's prayer for Solomon
	Solomon's first prayer at the Temple
	Solomon's second prayer at the Temple
	Solomon uging the people to pray
	Israelites at Mount Carmel
	Jehoshaphat thanking God
	Jehoshaphat and the multitude
	The people in the Valley of Blessing
	Hezekiah's thanksgiving
	Daniel's thanksgiving
	Zerubbabel
	Zerubbabel's fellow countrymen
	Ezra after having received Xerxes' letter
	Judas' hymn
	The people thanking for Herod's temple reconstruction
to die	Elijah's prayer to die
	Old men and women
vow	Jacob at Bethel
	Jephthah
	Hannah's vow
	Darius
for someone else	
abandoning wrath/forgiveness	The people's prayer for Jonathan
	Samuel's prayer for Saul to be forgiven

Table (*cont.*)

SUBJECT	PRAYER
assistance in a fight/victory	David's prayer for his army
cure/healing	David's prayer for his sick son
	Elijah saving a child
	Antigonus AJ
	The people's prayer for Agrippa
	Antigonus BJ
for the king	Benaiah
	The people's prayer for Solomon
	The people after the celebrations
	The people in Eleazar's letter
	Elissaeus
	Soldiers and officers
	The people's prayer for Agrippa
	The crowds in Rome
good future	Noah's prayer and curse for his sons
	Isaac's blessing
	Naomi
	Michal
	David's prayer for Solomon
graciousness	The people at Mount Sinai
	Benaiah
harm/misfortune	Noah's prayer and curse for his sons
	The priests accompanying Aristobulus
help/protection	Moses at Elis
	Moses at Rephidim
	Moses and Aaron
	Solomon's second prayer at the Temple
	Mordecai
	Soldiers and officers
long reign	The people's prayer for Solomon
	The people after the celebrations
	Archelaus and his people
	The crowds in Rome
no support	Onias
	Mariamme
pity/compassion	Nehemiah pleading for his fellow countrymen
support	Saul's prayer for David
	The people in Eleazar's letter
	Mattathias
	Herod
	Agrippa AJ
	Agrippa BJ

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Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

(Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums)

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